BING

Winter
2011

No. 159

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2012 are:

USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in **£ sterling** payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::
(a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year.

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EDITORIAL

I'm sure many of us look forward to December each year. Not only for the festiveness of the Christmas season, with its get-togethers amongst family and friends (and its calories galore), but also for the fact that this month, more than any in the previous 11 months, sees Bing Crosby move to the forefront among the nation's consciousness. While we'd love to see that same heightened level of public awareness throughout the year, Bing will always have Christmas on his side, and Christmas will always have Bing. So on behalf of myself and the ICC team, let me wish each of you a Merry, and White, Christmas.

Speaking of *White Christmas*, for those of you with a high definition television set, and a Blu-ray DVD player, I highly recommend the Blu-Ray edition of that 1954 Bing Crosby film. The image clarity will astound you!

We're very happy to learn that our honorary President Kathryn Crosby has recovered from her auto accident and is back in action, performing her show "My Last Years with Bing" on October 2nd in New York. Further details appear elsewhere in this issue. We continue to wish her well and much success with these performances.

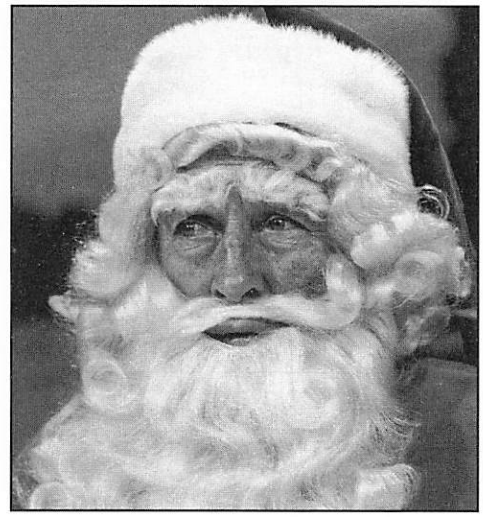
We were also saddened to learn of the passing of Dolores Hope, widow of Bob, on September 19th. Dolores had a wonderfully full life, achieving the age of 102! I was acquainted with Mrs. Hope through her music director, the late Nick Perito, and spoke to her on the phone. They involved me with choosing songs for what turned out to be her last album, at age 90 in 1999, appropriately titled "Young At Heart". My role was limited at best, as most of the songs I chose, they had already thought of. As Nick said to me after they went over the list I submitted, "It was like you were looking over our shoulders!"

Before I turn it over to Malcolm, who has details of what you'll find in this issue, let me offer each of our fellow members the best of everything for 2012. Let's all "start the New Year right" by getting your dues in quickly as we move forward to the world's oldest active fan club's 76th anniversary.

Greg Van Beek

Thanks, Greg and thank you also for providing the photo used for our front cover.

Members will be pleased to know that Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) now has its own record label - The Bing Crosby Archive - and the problems that members had in obtaining products from Collectors' Choice should now be over. There are more than 52,000 fans on the BCE Facebook site and to celebrate that milestone all the Bing Crosby Archive CDs are available exclusively



at www.BingCrosby.com. To place an order, visit The Bing Crosby Store at www.BingCrosby.com

BCE had no new releases of any kind to announce as we went to press, but they promised to share updates with your Editor and via their website, Facebook page, and Twitter account as soon as there's anything new! In turn, I'll put details on the Crosby Fan World site and email any members who care to give me their email address. I do send out an occasional email to some members already and there's no need for them to give me their details again.

One or two of you spotted that the number 158 was missing from the front cover of the last issue. This was not a change of policy but an error during the printing process for which the printer (who does such a good job for us) apologises.

There is an eclectic choice of material for your delectation in this issue. There is an in-depth report on the Leeds meeting in October from Jeremy Rose and we reach the end of Keith Parkinson's marathon *A-Z of Bing's Movies*. He started it in BING #93 issued in December 1989 so it has therefore run for 22 years and 67 issues. This must be some kind of a record! We have notes of interviews with Rose Marie, and with Bob Phillips who worked for BCE back in the early 1950s. The late lamented Lionel Pairpoint returns to our pages with a seasonal article and we take a look at what was happening to Bing 50 years ago. Richard Baker discusses discographies (and copyright) and Michael Collins considers an important work from Marghanita Laski. Can you guess what it was?

All the regulars are here too with Greg, Martin McQuade, Keith Parkinson, Gord Atkinson and Ken Crossland all having interesting things to say. We have even got a poem from John Walton. So get turning those pages!

Every good wish to you all for the festive season.

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As I write my report for the winter edition, the delightful hours of the 46th Leeds meeting are beginning to fade from memory, but before they do, I would like to thank all who attended and helped make this a very enjoyable day. Malcolm provided excellent entertainment which kept guests' attention and we were privileged for the third year running to have visitors from the United States and from France.

Jeremy Rose, deputising for Bob Halls who could not attend due to illness, has a full report on another page but here I would like to express my gratitude to all who attended and so kept going our tradition of meeting at least once a year to celebrate Bing's artistry and talent.

As we look back on the club's 75th anniversary year we can be proud of the three excellent magazines authored and edited by Malcolm and also the issuing and distribution of the Sepia series which will conclude in 2012 with volume 10 of this chronological master-work.

Richard Tay deserves much credit for his production work on the Sepia CDs and although it will be disappointing that the series will come to an end, all involved can be proud of bringing to conclusion a monumental project, which combined with the Jonzo series, has brought us virtually all of Bing's commercial recordings from 1926 through to 1956. Well done to all involved.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of ICC with a wish that their involvement with the club will bring them interest and enjoyment as they share their hobby with fellow Bing enthusiasts.

UNITED STATES

Nick Clooney (Augusta, Kentucky), Edward Norris (Wappingers Falls, New York), Albert Remington (Warren, Rhode Island), Joanne Thier (Brooklyn, New York).

Nick Clooney is the brother of Rosemary and father to film star George and he kindly gave an interview to Malcolm which was shown at the Leeds meeting. Nick is a gifted speaker and he spoke highly of Bing's talent.

DONATIONS

We very much appreciate the financial help provided by the following generous members -

UNITED STATES:-

Scott Ables, Tom Chevrette, James Clifford, Don Cretella, Howard Crosby, Milton Cummings, David Currie, Leonard Davis, Stanley Diebel, Anthony Diflorio, Laurence Doyle, Joseph Duncan, Helen Feiereisen, Mike Ferruzza, Ron Field, Dick Heman, Sean Joyce, Laurence Kieran, Albert Koenig, Marcia Kukla, Stanley Lebby, Joyce Lundberg, Paul Murphy, Al O'Hagan, Dolores Anorato, Dave Richards, Rev. Eugene Roberts, Robert Stagnaro, Robert Stratiff, Charles Townsend, Greg Van Beek, Charles Van Riper, Charles Vincent and Norman Wolfe.

CANADA:-

Don Roegele and Brittion Smith.

IRELAND:-

Paul Hennessey and Dermot Tallon.

UNITED KINGDOM:-

John Benstead, Arthur Blood, Charles Culley, Bob Halls, Ken Heason, Doreen Claire Hubbard, Jean Rainey, Jim Reilly, Neil Robinson, Harry C. Ross, Dennis Saville, Trevor Wagstaff and Jack Winegrad. Also we are pleased to report the generous support provided by most of the members attending the Leeds with particular generous contributions from Michael Reynolds, John Walton, Michael Winspear, Ken Shaw, Oisin Andrew, Mark Spry and Malcolm Macfarlane.

BELGIUM:-

Pierre de Bie

Donations and legacies are very welcome and gratefully acknowledged and we thank our beneficiaries for their continuing support.

DEATHS

Jim Kukura of New Jersey gave us the sad news of the passing of his father. Jim wrote:

"It is with the greatest of sadness, that I announce the passing of my father and fellow ICC member, Robert Kukura, of Roselle, New Jersey. Dad was 98 and had been a Bing fan for some 80 years. He recognized Bing's great talents early and was passionate about watching his films and listening to his music. He will be most deeply missed by his family and friends."

Our condolences go to Jim and his family. Robert must have been one of the longest running Bing fans.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 1 to 8 (Sepia Records)

These attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £6.50 and the price for Europe £7.00. Members in the US and Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington. The price for members in the rest of the world is £8.

Volume 9 will shortly be available and please note that due to inflation we have had to raise the price of the CDs by a modest 50p. David Currington and Wig Wiggins will make an appropriate adjustment in their respective areas.

The final volume, No. 10, should be available in April 2012.

BING CROSBY and the KRAFT MUSIC HALL – ICC 75th anniversary issue.

This acclaimed CD remains available from me and you are welcome to send for additional copies if you require them.

CROSBY CALENDAR 2012

Members should now have received their pre-ordered calendar and at the time of writing a few copies remain available for those who still wish to obtain one.

LEEDS 2012 (47th meeting)

Sunday, October 7th 2012 is the date for your diary.

My warmest seasonal greetings to all members.

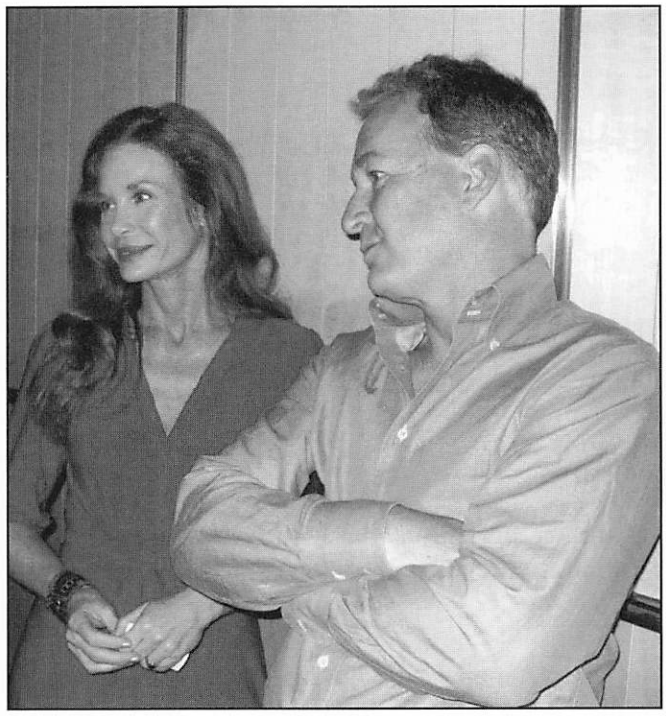
Michael Crampton

Kathryn in New York

We were all delighted to learn that Kathryn Crosby, our honorary president, was making a return to performing in October after her serious road accident. Martin McQuade went along to the show and now sends his report.

On Sunday, October 2nd Kathryn Crosby reprised her show, *My Last Years with Bing*, as part of an ongoing series, *On a Sunday Afternoon*, sponsored by The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium. Her elegant recital resoundingly answered the question posed in Vernon Duke's lyric, *Autumn in New York - Why does it seem so exciting?*

Kathryn was stunning, sleekly attired in a black suit comprised of slacks and tunic with brocaded collar and cuffs. She was escorted onto the stage by her grandson Nicholas while "Where the Blue of the Night" was performed on the grand piano by her arranger/pianist Eddie Sayegh. The opening song, "How About You" (*...and Harry Lillis' looks give me a thrill)* perfectly set the intimate mood. Among those in attendance were Kathryn's children, Mary and Harry.



Mary and Harry at the Lincoln Center event.

Act one was a tribute to the war years, illustrated with photos of Bing entertaining grateful throngs of servicemen and women. "Bing was very patriotic, but he was too young to serve in World War 1. In 1940 they said he was too old to fight in World War 2 and he hated that. These men were his heroes. More than anything he wanted to support them. He couldn't carry a rifle, but he could carry a golf club and he could carry a tune." Kathryn tenderly sang "You Made Me Love You," "I'm Beginning to See the Light," "It's Been a Long, Long Time" and "I'll Be Seeing You;" as well as two duets with Eddie – "Imagination" / "(I Love You) For Sentimental Reasons" and "Blue Skies" / "Just One of Those Things." These, in addition to film clips of "Road to Victory" from *The Shining Future* and "A Couple of Song and Dance Men" from *Blue Skies* enhanced the sentiment of the afternoon.

Act two explored Bing and Kathryn's courtship." My life with Bing began in the spring of 1953 at Paramount

Pictures with five little words. 'Hi Tex, What's your hurry?' His husky voice and blue eyes stopped me. Why, it was Bing Crosby. They said he was Hollywood royalty. Well, I was a kind of royalty too, Texas style. I started out as Miss Buccaneer Navy and I won a crown of orchids. And if that's not royal, I don't know what is." The song titles of Kathryn's selections told their special love story: "Let's Face the Music and Dance," "Pennies from Heaven," "I Wish You Love" and "True Love." Visuals consisted of photos familiar from Kathryn's books in addition to an excerpt from *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (a decidedly diminutive Kathryn); "Don't Fence Me In" from *Swingtime With the Stars* (Kathryn exhorted us to sing along); and the duet "Dream" from *The Bing Crosby Show for Lever Brothers.*

Kathryn meets up again with ICC members, Jane Dillon Stoutenborough (left) and Sally Locantore Monaghan.

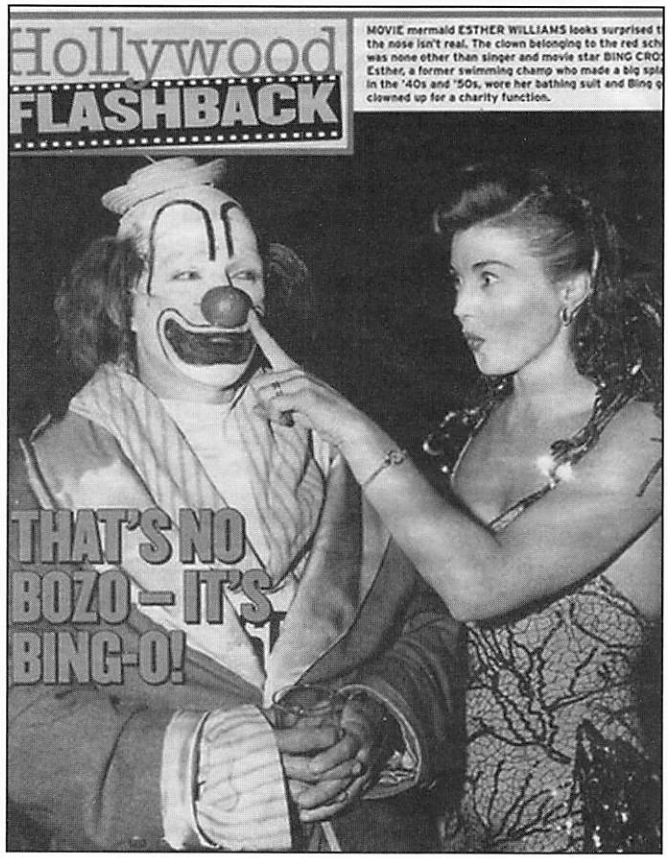
Act three commenced with this disclaimer. "I wasn't a regular housewife. I didn't have the usual domestic skills, but sometimes I did things that pleased Bing, and when I did, this is what he'd sing." She delivered the following just as Bing did (ad libs et all) with Buddy Cole's Dixieland ensemble in 1956: "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" and "My Baby Just Cares for Me." Kathryn's delivery of Mary's favorite tune, "Moonlight Becomes You," and "The Second Time Around" (we learned that Bing commissioned Sammy Cahn to especially write this lyric for his wife) led to a screening of "Everything Old Is New Again" from *Bing! A Fiftieth Anniversary Gala.*

The Yuletide season began early as Kathryn sang the verse to "White Christmas," which perfectly merged with Bing's resonant performance of the song from a clip from *The Sounds of Christmas.* Then Harry and Mary joined their indomitable mother on stage, bringing an all – too – soon finale to a glamorous and nostalgic fall day.

Martin McQuade

Bing the Clown

Pete Cakanic alerted Greg Van Beek to the fact that Bing made the supermarket tabloids again, albeit this time in a positive light. On the inside of back cover of the Sept. 19 issue of *The Globe* is a picture of Bing in the "Hollywood Flashback" column with a caption that says "That's No Bozo - It's Bing-O". It pictures Bing in clown attire holding a drink with beautiful Esther Williams touching his fake nose. Bing was taking part in the Ringling Brothers circus show on September 4, 1948 at the Pan-Pacific grounds with many other stars as part of a massive benefit performance for St. John's Hospital, Santa Monica.



Pete Cakanic went on to tell us that the average weekly circulation of *The Globe* is 370,000 so the picture reached a good sized audience.

The Official Home of Bing Crosby

There have been some great additions to the web site at www.bingcrosby.com. The highlight for your editor is the video vault which now has 28 rare items including Bing singing "Bridge Over Troubled Water" on the Pearl Bailey Show in 1971, "Auf Wiedersehen, My Dear" from the 1932 short *Hollywood on Parade*, "Silent Night" from his first TV appearance in 1948, "Christmas Island" from his 1971 Christmas show and several commercials we didn't even know existed. There's even a clip from *Goldilocks* too.

The audio vault contains a number of Bing's radio shows plus the entire original 14 part BBC series from 1973 "The Bing Crosby Story". This BBC series will be welcomed by many members as it is a top class production and it hasn't been heard since 1979.

Also, almost 60 images of album covers, about 90 magazine covers, and over 400 pieces of sheet music - with more to come – have been added to the Photo Gallery section. And while you peruse them, you can listen to Bing singing a wide variety of songs.

This site is an absolute 'must' for those with Internet access.

Swingin' & Croonin': A Night of Prima, Dino and Bing

San Gabriel Valley Music Theatre kicked off its 2011-2012 season on July 30 with "Swingin' & Croonin': A Night of Prima, Dino and Bing," starring Louis Prima, Jr.; Dean Martin's son, Ricci; and Bing's grandson, Phil Crosby. The event took place at the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, 320 S. Mission Drive, San Gabriel.

Nat Cole & Bing Crosby Companies Sue L.A. Area Internet Merchant

The Courthouse News Service of October 11 carried the following article by Matt Reynolds.

LOS ANGELES (CN) - Nat King Cole's and Bing Crosby's copyright owners claim an L.A.-area Internet marketer is profiting from "one of the largest operations in the world involving the sale of unauthorized musical and video titles." They call CD Listening Bar and its affiliates, run by CEO Bruce Ogilvie, "active participants in music piracy of the most blatant and harmful kind."

King Cole Partners and HLC Properties filed separate, virtually identical federal complaints. HLC is named for Crosby's given names, Harry Lillis Crosby.

The late singers' companies demand "an immediate stop" to CD Listening Bar's "massive, ongoing and intentional infringement" of their copyrights, trademarks and publicity rights."

"Defendants are active participants in music piracy of the most blatant and harmful kind," the complaints state. "Specifically, defendants own and operate a worldwide distribution company in the business of selling sound recordings on vinyl LPs and CDs, motion pictures and other videos on DVDs and video games in various formats. In furtherance of that business venture, defendants, without any license or authority, have illegally sought out, imported into the United States and sold unauthorized copies of plaintiffs' sound recordings."

CD Listening Bar sells the unauthorized recordings through online retailers, and distributes its products all over the world. It also does business as Super D, Phantom Distribution, Super D/Phantom and Phantom Sound and Vision, all of which are named as defendants, as is Bruce Ogilvie, who is described as CEO, an owner of and "the dominant influence in Super D."

The copyright holders claim that CD Listening Bar "overtly claims to the public through its marketing and websites that it currently stocks 'the world's largest selection of music, movies and games' and that its stock contains 340,411 unique music and video titles of which 120,000 are U.S. CD titles, 70,000 are U.S. DVD titles and over 150,000 are non-parallel import titles from 32 countries, with additional titles coming in on a consistent basis."

The plaintiff's songs are included in those thousands of titles, without authorization, they say.

"Defendants are aware that their actions of importing and selling certain Crosby audio and video recordings are not legal, and that such conduct constitutes infringement of copyright, trademark and publicity rights laws," according to the HLC complaint. "Moreover, defendants openly misrepresent to the public their authority to sell this music, falsely claiming that all of their products are 'legitimate.' Defendants also indicate that much of their music inventory is obtained through 'imports' from 32 different countries, which they misleadingly explain as 'genuine merchandise released for sale in another country ... not to be confused with bootlegs or pirated material,' thus falsely implying to their customers and the public that such titles are being legally imported and distributed in the United States. Defendants further erroneously claim that they support all copyright laws and that they pay all appropriate mechanical licenses on their 'imports,' when in fact defendants are engaged in one of the largest operations in the world involving the sale of unauthorized musical and video titles."

The Cole and Crosby companies say Ogilvie is causing them irreparable harm, and that he has "profited greatly" from it.

"Defendants have stolen and are profiting from the legacy built by Crosby, which plaintiff has tried vehemently to preserve and protect. Additionally, by making unauthorized products containing audio and video recordings and certain compositions of Crosby available to retailers throughout the world, defendants are permitting these recordings to be further disseminated over the Internet, and freely available to millions, in further violation of plaintiff's rights. In sum, defendants' conduct severely impairs and has the potential to destroy and/or de-value plaintiff's ability to sell, lawfully utilize and otherwise control the quality of sound recordings of Crosby. Defendants' infringing conduct with regards to plaintiff's respective rights must be stopped immediately and defendants must understand

they cannot continue to run their business with complete disregard of the relevant intellectual property laws," the complaint states. Virtually identical claims are made in the Cole complaint.

Both plaintiffs are represented by Corina Maccarin with Milstein Adelman. They seek an injunction and damages for misappropriation of pre-1972 sound recordings, commercial appropriation of name and likeness, false designation of origin, description and representation, and quantum meruit. Cole's complaint demands $150,000 per infringed recording.

Nat "King" Cole, a singer and pianist, died from lung cancer in 1965, age 45. Bing Crosby died at 74 while playing a round of golf in Madrid in 1977.

Neither Milstein Adelman nor Super D immediately responded to requests for comment.

Matt Reynolds

(Editor: We know nothing more than that contained in the article but presumably huge sums of money must be involved. If any further information is received, we'll pass it on.)

That Movie, Named After That Song

Greg Van Beek examines Bing's seasonal classic in depth and finds many facts that you may not have known before.

As you peruse this issue of BING, many of you, like me, are in the depths of winter's chill and snow, with dreams of Christmases white looming on the horizon. This may be the most opportune time to research some trivia regarding one of Bing Crosby's most beloved films. A film that, much like the song whose title it utilizes, has become as much a part of the Christmas season as snow and mistletoe, or trees and kids sitting on Santa's knees... Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*.

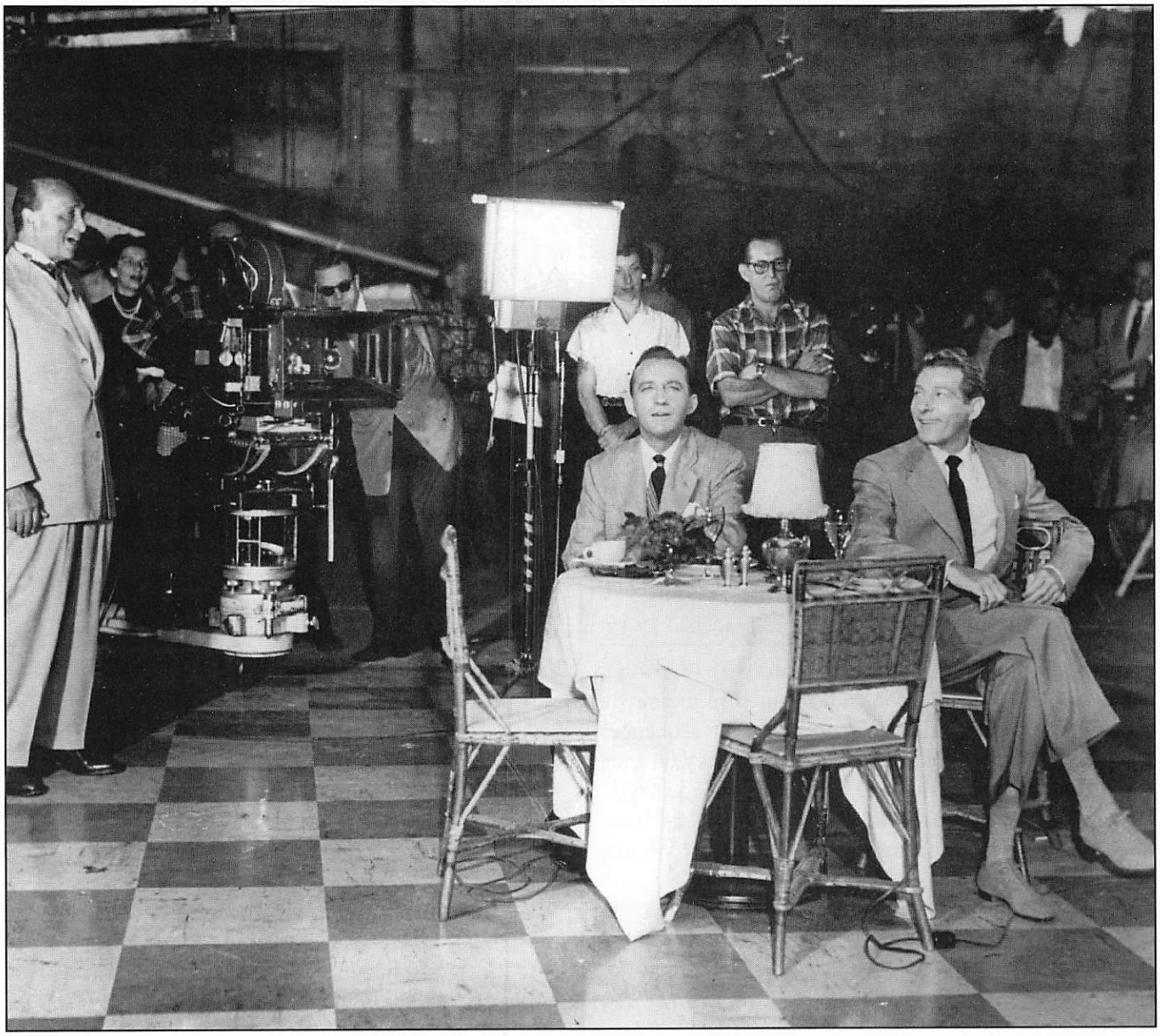
Produced at Paramount Pictures between September and November 1953, *White Christmas* was the first to be filmed in the then-new widescreen VistaVision process. It also introduced the Perspecta directional sound system, a precursor to stereophonic sound. The film had its US premiere at the famed Radio City Music Hall in New York City on October 14, 1954 (later re-released to movie theaters on October 25, 1961), taking in $12 million at the box office, making it the top moneymaker for 1954 by a wide margin. The second highest moneymaker of that year, *The Caine Mutiny*, earned $8.7 million, which featured Rosemary Clooney's husband, José Ferrer.

White Christmas was intended to reunite Bing with Fred Astaire for their third Irving Berlin musical, following *Holiday Inn* (1942) and *Blue Skies* (1946). Astaire declined the project after reading the script. Donald O'Connor was considered to replace Astaire, but also passed because of an illness supposedly contracted from the mule he co-starred with in the *Francis the Talking Mule* franchise. O'Connor, in turn, was replaced by Danny Kaye. The choreography for the film (including the production number under that title) was directed by an un-credited Bob Fosse. The sequences with the train had to be filmed at 20th Century Fox, as they were the only film studio to house a standing train set.

Vera-Ellen's singing was dubbed mostly by Trudy Stevens. Clooney's and Stevens' voices are the ones heard in the film.

Despite its "beloved holiday classic" status, there has never been an official "original soundtrack" album for the film released in any form. Decca controlled the soundtrack rights, but Rosemary Clooney was under exclusive contract to Columbia, who would not allow her to appear on a competing label. As a result, Decca and Columbia each released their own *White Christmas* albums in 1954, although neither is an official soundtrack. Decca's album featured the movie cast minus Rosemary Clooney, with Peggy Lee taking over Clooney's part. Columbia's album had Rosemary Clooney singing eight songs from the film. Both albums have been issued on CD in recent years. Rosemary recorded the song "Sisters" with her real-life sister, Betty Clooney for Columbia. On the Decca album, Peggy Lee recorded the song as a duet with Trudy Stevens.

When Bob Wallace (Bing Crosby) appears on the Ed Harrison TV show, he is briefly shown - as if the audience is watching him at home - on a 1950s television set. The brand of the television is DuMont, one of the first manufacturers of TVs in America and the name of TV network from the 1950s. Jackie Gleason, Morey Amsterdam and Bishop Fulton J. Sheen were some of the notables that began on the DuMont Network, which ceased operations in 1956. The TV camera in the Ed Harrison Show scene is a real one (a classic RCA monochrome). The call sign atop it was real as well - it was that of Channel 4, NBC's (and thus RCA's) flagship station in New York, which changed its call sign to WRCA-TV the year of the film's release. (They adopted their current WNBC-TV calls in 1960). The "Ed Harrison TV Show" that Bing Crosby appears on is a reference to the "Ed Sullivan Show" that featured known stars, new talent and vaudeville acts. Ed Harrison was played by Johnny Grant who did not have a long acting career in the movies, but was the honorary Mayor of Hollywood, California who officiated over the unveilings of Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame



Bing and Danny film the Florida night club scene.

from the early 1960's until his death in 2008.

The song "Snow" was composed by Irving Berlin, but originally was titled "Free", and had nothing at all to do with snow. It was written for *Call Me Madam*. The melody and some of the words were kept, but the lyrics were changed by Berlin into a song more appropriate for a Christmas movie. For example, one of the lines of the original song is 'Free - the only thing worth fighting for is to be free; Free - a different world you'd see if it were left to me'.

The "Sisters" comedy act that Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye perform was not originally in the script. They were clowning around on the set and the director thought it was so funny that it was written in. For the song "Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army", there is the lyric, 'Jolson, Hope and Benny all for free'. This is a reference to three wartime entertainers: Al Jolson, Bob Hope and Jack Benny. The original words were 'Crosby, Hope and Jolson all for free', but the lyric was changed because with Crosby in the cast the original lyric would break the fourth wall.

The song, "What Can You Do with a General?" was originally written for an un-produced project called *Stars on My Shoulders*. Berlin also wrote "A Crooner - A Comic" for Bing and his planned co-star Donald O'Connor, but when O'Connor left the project so did the song. Crosby and Kaye also recorded another Berlin song ("Santa Claus") for the opening WWII Christmas Eve show scene, but it was not used in the final film; their recording of the song survives, however. For those with internet access, you can hear the unused Crosby / Kaye soundtrack pre-recording of "Santa Claus", all one minute and twenty-three seconds of it, by going to this webpage: http://www.divshare.com/download/15666238-e38

Paramount publicity photos survive, however, taken during the "Santa Claus" number (such as the one reproduced with this article), proving it was obviously filmed, but cut before the film's premiere. Perhaps someday the footage may be found and restored to the film.

Other publicity photos also survive, offering a tantalizing glimpse of scenes not featured in the movie, providing the possibility of even more cut sequences. One photo shows Bing and Rosemary Clooney on stage together behind a microphone on the "Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me" set. Could it be that Bing and Rosie filmed a duet that would've followed her solo? We may never know for certain.

A photo showing Danny Kaye pouring a bowl of popcorn over Bing's head during the "Snow" number offers proof of further contemplated use of props to simulate winter / snow scenes during that segment. Obviously this was filmed, either during a separate, unused take, or that particular bit was cut from the take that was used in the film.

A myth persists that all of Vera-Ellen's costumes, down to her robe and sleepwear, were designed to cover her neck, which had been damaged by anorexia. This is untrue. Seeing her in the movie premiere TV footage for 1954's *A Star Is Born*, she is wearing a low cut gown and her neck is clearly visible.

Even though Judy is the younger Haynes sister, Rosemary Clooney was actually seven years younger than Vera-Ellen.

Within the film, a number of famous performers appear. Dancer Barrie Chase, who later became Fred Astaire's partner on his annual Emmy award-winning TV specials during 1958-60 and various other TV appearances throughout the 1960's, appears unbilled, as the character Doris Lenz ('Mutual, I'm sure!'). Future Academy Award winner George Chakiris also appears, and makes appearances in two musical numbers (most notably as one of the male dancers surrounding Rosemary Clooney during the "Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me" number), but is unbilled. John Brascia is the lead dancer who appears opposite Vera-Ellen throughout the movie, particularly in the "Mandy", "Choreography", and "Abraham" numbers. The photo Vera-Ellen shows of her brother Benny (the one Phil refers to as "Freckle-faced Haynes, the dog-faced boy") is actually a photo of Carl Switzer, who played Alfalfa in *The Little Rascals*, in an army field jacket and helmet

liner. The bandleader at the Carousel Club was Dick Stabile, an actual bandleader who started his own ensemble in 1935 and began working with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis from 1949 up to his death in 1980. He was the leader of the orchestra on many of Martin's popular recordings.

The Pine Tree, Vermont "Columbia Inn" is actually the remodeled Connecticut "Holiday Inn" from the 1942 movie of the same title. According to Rosemary Clooney, the "midnight snack" scene in which Bob Wallace expounds on his theory of what foods cause what dreams was almost entirely improvised. Many of Bob Wallace's more unusual turns of phrase were lifted straight from Bing's own speech patterns.

And a close eye can spot many 'goofs' during production that are left in the final edit:

*At the start of his surprise party, General Waverly blows out the candles on the cake at his table. At the very end of the movie the candles are lit again.

*In the hospital, Wallace is almost to the door when Davis calls him back. Wallace sits down on the end of the cot, but in the next shot, he is seated beside Davis on the side of the bed.

*Waverly comes to the stairs in the final scene and the women have stopped short of the stairs. The camera moves to the wide shot and comes back to the general and the women are stepping back again.

*The train that transports The Haynes Sisters and Wallace and Davis from Florida to Vermont is shown as being of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in one sequence, and of the Southern Pacific Railroad in another. Neither railway ran on the east coast of the U.S.

*When Bob and Phil sit down in the club car, Bob puts a suitcase down beside the table. When he gets up to tell the Haynes sisters off, the suitcase is not there.

*The Columbia Inn Station Wagon that picks them up at the train station has a black and yellow California license plate when they are supposed to be in Vermont.

*While the quartet is singing "Snow" on the train to Vermont, shadows of the crew and camera can be seen on the table's edge as the camera pulls back.

*During the "Mandy" number, Betty is seen at the top of the production number set then seconds later on the stage with the rest of the performers near the end of the number.

*When Bob is singing "White Christmas" during the war scene, he has his hands on his belt and his index fingers keep changing positions between shots.

*During the "Minstrel Show" number, the words go: "Oh, Mister Bones! That's terrible!... Ah, ha!... Yes, Mister Bones, that's terrible!... Oh, ho!" Watch Danny Kaye. He flubs the lip-sync and mixes up the "Oh, ho!" and the "Ah, ha!" Apparently, Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney noticed because, for a few seconds, it looks like they're trying not to laugh. But the pre-recorded soundtrack covers up any giggles that might have been happening.

*A full orchestra can be seen in the orchestra pit at the beginning of the dress rehearsal for "The Minstrel Show" number. When the number is over, the orchestra has disappeared, even though they were playing just moments before.

*Right before the "Snow!" number on the train, the menu in the background is lying on its side. At the start of the musical number, all four singers simultaneously look at the menu, which has now righted itself with no apparent help from them.

*When Davis and Novello are talking about the sheriff, Davis suggests that Novello continue keeping the sheriff busy and then pushes Novello through the door and follows him through the door. However, when the camera follows Davis through the door, Novello is nowhere to be seen.

*Before the "Count Your Blessings" song, Wallace is holding a sandwich up in one of his hands, but in the next shot, he's no longer holding the sandwich, and both of his hands are flat on the table.

*Early in the film there is a scene from the control room for the Wallace and Davis radio show. An engineer is seen sitting in front of the audio mixing console, but the VU meters that would show the level of the audio being sent out are not moving.

*A distinctive red bass drum used in the opening wartime scene at Monte Cassino as Captain Wallace performs the film's title song is conspicuously visible again just outside the dressing room of the Haynes Sisters at Novello's back in the USA several years later.

*In the opening when Bob Wallace is singing 'White Christmas' the snare drum is visible but keeps disappearing and reappearing as the song continues.

*During "The Best Things" dance number, at the end of the number, on the very last twirl around a kneeling Danny Kaye before she falls into his arms, Vera-Ellen trips over Danny Kaye's outstretched left foot. She recovers so smoothly that it is very difficult to catch.

*During the scene in the Inn when Judy is trying to convince Phil they should pretend to be engaged, she has him cornered on the couch and we hear him say the words 'I feel the same way about my cocker spaniel.' It's very obvious that those words were dubbed in and he originally said something else.

*While Phil and Bob are lip-syncing the song "Sisters" (allowing Judy and Betty time to escape out the window), there is a phrase at the end that Bob (Bing Crosby) messes up on. "Lord help the mister who comes between me and my sister; and Lord help the sister who comes between me and my man!" Bing Crosby messes up on the last phrase and says "Lord help the mister" instead of "Lord help the sister". It's very obvious that Danny Kaye catches the mistake.

*During the song "Snow" on the train, a close-up of Danny Kaye shows his lips moving but the voice coming out is definitely Bing Crosby's. This happens a couple of

times during the song.

*Near the end of the movie, Emma, Judy and Betty dash out of the far side of the entryway, supposedly to get to the backstage, in the opposite direction. By the size of the 'inn' (set) it would have taken them several minutes to get there, yet Emma - within one minute - is calmly standing just inside the barn to welcome the General to his surprise.

*When the girls are in their dressing room at the beginning of the movie, Judy puts the coffee pot down and in the next shot, she is holding it again.

One final bit of irony surrounding the film *White Christmas*, Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney all died at the same age: 74.

My thanks to the Internet Movie Database and Wikipedia websites for the invaluable research they were able to provide for this article.

Greg Van Beek

(Editor: Wow! I shall watch the film with fresh eyes next time.)

He Had Bing Taped!

In September, your editor had the great pleasure of speaking via a Skype connection over the Internet to Bob Phillips, who worked for Bing Crosby Enterprises in the 1950s, and he had some interesting memories to share with us.

Bing inspects the "Mark-2" version of the BCE VTR in 1952 watched by Jack Mullin (left) and Wayne Johnson.

Bob moved to LA in 1951, and whilst still in High School he had a summer job at a TV station. One of directors at the TV station knew the Bing Crosby people and suggested to Bob that he should go along for an interview with someone who was working on the development of the video tape recorder. Bob didn't know that it was Bing Crosby Enterprises (BCE) and that his boss was going to be the legendary Jack Mullin. Members will remember the important part Jack played in the development of magnetic tape after WWII. Jack had only one assistant at the time, Wayne Johnson, and Bob became the third employee.

Jack Mullin taught Bob tape editing and the splicing was still being done then with scissors and Scotch tape. Bing's radio shows were taped, and Robert Bader is using these tapes now to issue the wonderful CDs we have had in the last year or so. Robert Bader was keen to meet Bob as he is the only person left alive from the team that taped Bing's radio shows. Mr. Bader's first question was to ask about the white powder which kept falling out of the tape boxes. Bob explained that it was talcum powder which was used to stop the tape sticking. Bob was pleased that after 60 years it was still there!

Bob said that Jack Mullin was a fantastic editor. He was a stickler for quality and top class equipment was used throughout the process. Bob would be used as an additional tape editor on occasion and this was during 1952/53. Every 6 weeks or so, depending on Bing's schedule, a recording session would be held which might run from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. when Bing and the guest stars would record songs and dialogue. An audience would come in for a section of the session although the show done with the audience would never be heard on the air. Mullin had put together 42 different audience reactions which could be added later and sometimes there would be big arguments about what reaction was appropriate. Murdo Mackenzie was the show's producer and he would sit on a stool during the editing process and use a French taxi cab's horn he had brought back from Paris to stop the arguing!

Bing and the Bell Sisters check their scripts for a GE show.

Sometimes it might be necessary to update dialogue that had already been recorded and Bing would tape this wherever he was, be it at Elko or elsewhere. This usually was merged with the dialogue of the guest star or

announcer. Often different studios with varying acoustics might be used. The editors could create medleys by taking parts of different songs. These might be in different keys and the keys would have to be matched by speeding the tape up or down. It took a long time to edit the shows to the required time. Murdo Mackenzie would supervise the editing and there would be bits of tapes hung up on a string in the studio. Mackenzie would have to use a spreadsheet setting out the different parts of show in order to pull it all together. A big library of music was held with artists and songs all appropriately catalogued.

I asked about the shows which purported to come from Paris in 1953 and Bob confirmed that they were taped in California before Bing's departure although it was possible that some updated dialogue might have been flown back from Europe later. The editing for the radio shows was done in LA weekly; however, there were shows aired that were done in Paris at the end of the trip. Bob had wanted to go with Bing to Paris but he was told firmly by Mullin that he had been recruited to work on the video recorder and he had to remain in Los Angeles with Mullin.

Bob Phillips told me that Bing was "technical" and took a real interest in the editing and all the other processes. Bob said of Bing, "He was great, a very nice person. He was very easy to work with and he had a good sense of humour." Bob first met him at the BCE Christmas party in 1951 when everyone had to take a present and Bob drew out Bing's. Bob was about the same age as some of Bing's sons; so he remembered Bob for being like his sons.

A list was maintained of people to whom Bing wanted to be helpful and this included Judy Garland, Rosemary Clooney, Louis Armstrong and Les Paul. One Saturday morning a phone call was received from Bing saying that Judy Garland wanted to record her contribution to the show that afternoon at a downtown theatre. Everything was immediately dropped to fulfil the request. I marvelled at this and wondered how John Scott Trotter could have coped with the short notice. JST was under contract to BCE and while he had some key musicians he would call in session players to fill out the orchestra. Bob said that it was a bitter sweet moment when the half-hour show ended.

Bob remained with BCE until 1957 when the Electronics Division of BCE was sold to the 3M company.

Bob gave a presentation called "Bing and the recording revolution" in Virginia on September 30 and **Wig Wiggins** went along and now sends his report.

BOB PHILLIPS PRESENTATION

On September 30th. I attended the presentation by Bob Phillips about Bing Crosby at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which is located near George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, some half hour's drive from my home in Arlington. I had met Bob earlier through the courtesy of Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises, whom Bob is assisting as a consultant to BCE for the identification and remastering of the treasure trove of audio and video tapes from the basement of Bing's home in Hillsborough, California.

Bob Phillips is an electronics engineer, now officially retired but actually still employed as a consultant by the Verizon telephone and telecommunications giant, in addition to many other activities such as his work with Bing Crosby Enterprises. His relationship with BCE has come full circle after more than half a century, as he was originally employed by Bing's organization in the early 1950s, when Bob was only a teenager. He told me that he was only seventeen when he was hired by-the legendary magnetic tape wizard, Jack Mullin, as the third person on a team of experts responsible for developing a video tape system for Bing Crosby that eventually transformed the television industry. As a result, Bob Phillips has detailed knowledge about the inner workings of Bing's radio and television activities in the 1950s that is unsurpassed today.

The Osher Institute is a professional organization for various activities offered mainly to senior citizens of the Northern Virginia area, and the audience for Bob's presentation about Bing reflected that. Well attended, the conference room was filled with carefully-attentive ladies, and a few gentlemen, who were of an age to have remembered Bing well from his days on national radio. Bob's highly professional presentation included a most informative set of visual power-point slides as well as occasional audio excerpts from Bing's radio broadcasts, to illustrate some of his major points. The audience remained clearly very interested throughout and asked a number of relevant questions, even though some of Bob's descriptions of the technical details of the developments in tape technology did require close attention. All-in-all, a most informative two hour presentation about aspects of Bing Crosby's activities that are generally not that familiar to the average person, and one that generated a generous and well-deserved round of applause at its conclusion.

Since I had previously arranged for Bob Phillips to have direct contact with our editor and other members of the ICC in Britain, resulting in Bob's telephone interview with Malcolm, many of the details of Bob's presentation about Bing can be found in Malcolm's above report. Therefore, I will not repeat those here. However, as a life-long Bing Crosby collector, I would like, instead, to describe several new insights that I learned from Bob Phillips that I think will be of interest to ICC club members.

BING AND AUDIO/VIDEO TAPE

Although it is well-known that Bing pioneered the pre-recording of his radio shows, first on transcription discs beginning with the Philco show in 1946, and later on audio tape, which eventually changed the national radio industry so that it was no longer a live medium, his direct interest in and active support of the development of video tape is not that familiar. According to Bob Phillips, Bing very early on asked Jack Mullin to establish a development group for a video tape recorder like that of the audio recorder. When he learned this could be possible, Bing encouraged his engineers to make a determined effort in the video tape field, in time for Bing's first television program for General Electric in 1954.

His early television programs were actually filmed in advance in the studio, like miniature movies, for subsequent broadcast. Bob Phillip's point was that Bing was looking for a way to pre-record his television shows on tape in the same manner that he had long since been doing for his radio broadcasts. The result was an active competition between Bing Crosby Enterprises and the Ampex Corporation (which Bing had earlier backed financially in its rise to the forefront of the audio tape industry) to invent the best video tape technology, including a new kind of magnetic tape needed for the recording equipment. BCE and Ampex (again funded by Bing) worked for several years on these problems, until Ampex won the race with a system that eventually became the television broadcast industry standard. And, at the same time, video tape appeared as a new product from Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing, the so-called 3M Company. At this point (about 1957), with no more hills to climb in the audio or video fields, the BCE engineering division was sold by Bing and Bob Phillips left BCE. But in the process, Bing Crosby had become as much responsible for the revolutions in both the radio and television industries as any other single person.

BING'S RECORDED RADIO PROGRAMS

Bob Phillips also provided a fascinating look at the behind-the-scenes activities concerning Bing's radio programs from the late 1940s to the mid 1960s. After leaving the Kraft Music Hall in 1946, Bing steadily transitioned from live radio broadcasts, to live performances that were simultaneously recorded for subsequent editing and later transmission, and eventually to performances that were completely pre-recorded under studio conditions and were significantly edited before being aired. In fact, according to Bob Phillips, many of Bing's Chesterfield and General Electric programs that were heard by the radio audience never actually took place at all. Instead, marathon recording sessions at times lasting from early morning to late at night would separately create Bing's musical selections for many programs, the separate songs and dialog with Bing's guests, and even the various audience reactions (laughter, applause, etc.). Then a team of engineers, including at one time Bob Phillips, under the direction of Murdo MacKenzie would work to "create" the actual broadcasts through a complicated editing process. Bob said that it often took a full week of work by the editors to perfect a single 30-minute radio program. In response to a question, Bob replied that Bing did not personally participate in the editing process. Bing left all of that to Murdo MacKenzie and his team while he was off and running to other activities.

Another aspect of this process was that the musical pre-recordings for Bing's radio shows, first with John Scott Trotter and later with Buddy Cole, were made under the same studio conditions as his commercial recording sessions for Decca Records. Thus these radio recordings were of the same high quality as those released from Bing's regular studio sessions. And in fact, beginning in 1953 with the album "Some Fine Old Chestnuts", Decca actually licensed a number of Bing's radio recordings and issued them as either single records or long-playing albums on the Decca label. Bing's radio recordings were first class in every way, and fortunately many of them are now being remastered from Bing's original tapes and released on compact disc by Bing Crosby Enterprises.

BING'S IMPACT ON AMERICAN BUSINESS

Bob Phillips also pointed out Bing's major influence over the years on the development and success of a

number of major companies with which he was involved. Beginning with the fledgling CBS radio network (Columbia Broadcasting System) which hired Bing in 1931 and went on to become the biggest rival of the predominant NBC (National Broadcasting Company), followed by the upstart Decca Records in 1934 which rose from nowhere to become one of the "big three" of the recording industry (along with RCA Victor and Columbia/Brunswick), Bing's star power spurred both CBS and Decca on to much greater success than would have ever been possible otherwise. Bing also was a major factor in the recovery of Paramount Pictures from the onslaught of the sound film era and the depths of the Depression. And after he left the Kraft Music Hall and NBC in 1946 because of their refusal to allow him to pre-record his radio show, Bing moved to the "second-class" network that was to become ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation) and led ABC into becoming a major player in both national radio and television. And Bing also was the biggest supporter of the Ampex Corporation as it became the leader in the audio and video recording fields. Not to mention Bing's early support of the freeze-dried food and drink industry through his investment in what became the Minute Maid orange juice company. The list could go on, but Bob's point was that Bing Crosby was an important participant in many corporations that had a significant impact on the American way of life.

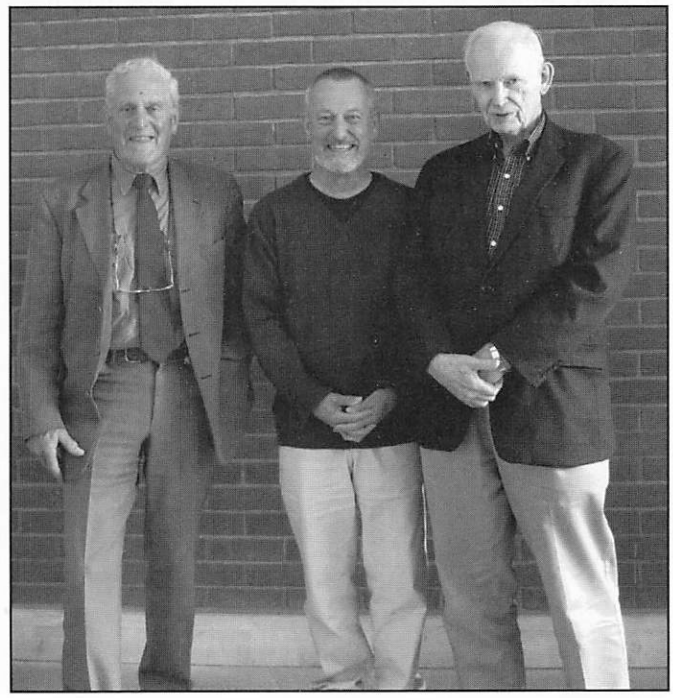
These were the major impressions that I brought away from Bob Phillips' excellent presentation at the Osher Institute. He knows so much about Bing, and Bing's wide range of interests and activities, that it was a distinct pleasure to hear these insights from him. Bing Crosby remains a unique and fascinating person even to those of us who think we already know almost everything there is to know about his life and career. There always is more to learn, and my personal thanks to Bob Phillips for the opportunity to open a few more doors that we might otherwise not be aware of. And my thanks to Robert Bader for the "intro" to Bob Phillips. It's always interesting to learn more details that prove Bing certainly was a lot more than just a crooner!

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

Bob's visit to London

Immediately after his presentation in Virginia, Bob flew to Europe and went on to London to support his grandson in the World Skills Competition. He had offered to meet any Crosby fans who might be available and Colin Stewart and Michael Crampton journeyed down to meet him. Both men were fascinated by Bob's stories and they found him to be a remarkable man.

They discovered that he had worked in 51 countries, the most recent setting up the mobile telephone network in Afghanistan! Bob had a great admiration for Bing, his kindness to staff, always ready to help anyone in trouble and he remembered those who had worked with him; e.g. when he saw Bob at the Pebble Beach Clambake a couple of years after he had left and invited him to the party.



Bob Phillips (right) meets Colin Stewart (left) and Michael Crampton on his recent visit to London.

Bob told a lovely story of watching David Sarnoff, the big chief of RCA, arrive in a fleet of limos. He came out dressed in a grey suit followed by the rest of the board all dressed in black and then led a procession into the BCE offices where they announced they were going to buy them out - they did not succeed!

After leaving London, Bob went on to Brussels and gave his presentation to the European Commission. It certainly helps get the message out about Bing's importance to the entertainment industry!

Rose Marie

Many people will remember Rose Marie from her most famous role as television comedy writer Sally Rogers in the CBS situation comedy *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961-1966). But there's so much more including a Bing connection!

Rose Marie Mazetta was born in New York City on August 15, 1923 and as a child performer she had a successful singing career as Baby Rose Marie - she dropped the "Baby" at the age of 15. On stage from age 3 she also made seven films between 1929 and 1935 including *International House* with W. C. Fields in 1933. Her first appearance on celluloid was in *Baby Rose Marie, the Child Wonder* (1929) a Vitaphone short in which she sang three songs. In her book "Hold the Roses", she describes a visit to Paramount (when she was seven) to see Bing "who was very kind and cordial and that was about it."

Rose Marie became a very successful singer and comedienne in the 1940s and went on to appear on Perry Como's radio show. She married trumpeter Bobby Guy in 1946. Before he joined the Forces, Bobby had been with the Kay Kyser band and in 1946 he was approached by Perry Botkin to join John Scott Trotter's regular ensemble supporting Bing on his radio show and on record. Bobby remained with JST until 1954. Rose Marie herself guested on Bing's Chesterfield show on April 25, 1951 when she exchanged some dialogue with him and then sang "My Blue Heaven".

Rose Marie on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*

She later portrayed Myrna Gibbons on CBS's *The Doris Day Show* and was also a frequent panelist on the game show *Hollywood Squares*. From 1977–81, she co-starred with Rosemary Clooney, Helen O'Connell and Margaret Whiting in the musical revue *4 Girls 4*, which toured the U.S. and appeared on television several times.

It was through the *4 Girls 4* connection that Kathy Brown, who runs the Rosemary Clooney web sites, made contact with Rose Marie and then passed on the details to me.

I spoke to Rose Marie by telephone in September and she spoke very warmly about Bing saying "he was just wonderful and we became friends." Her husband was a golfer and he wanted to join Lakeside Golf Club where Bing was a member. To help him, Bing signed his application form to join the club but when there was no response after two months, Mr. Guy contacted the club to be told that Bing had never signed an application before and they wondered if it was genuine. The club official duly contacted Bing who confirmed that he had indeed signed the form and Bobby was then admitted to the club. Bobby also played in Bing's Pebble Beach pro-am on several occasions.

I asked Rose Marie what her husband (who died in 1964) said about working with Bing. She said that it was "the thrill of a lifetime" for him and it seems that John Scott Trotter often wrote arrangements which would showcase Bobby's playing. Bobby can be heard to particularly good effect on "My Devotion" from the GE Show of May 7, 1953.

Malcolm Macfarlane

DISCOGRAPHIES, AND COLLECTORS – SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS

Richard Baker has put together a very good discography of Bing's work on the Internet and he has some relevant comments about discographies in general.

If one "Googles" "Discography" coupled with the name of virtually any recording artist, you will get dozens of responses which turn out, in the main, to be no more than lists of CDs or records stocked by individual suppliers. I think that a more correct term for them would be "Stock list".

If you are very lucky you might get a list of CDs of the particular artist that is somewhere close to a comprehensive listing of everything in issue, but rarely will you find what to my mind is a true discography.

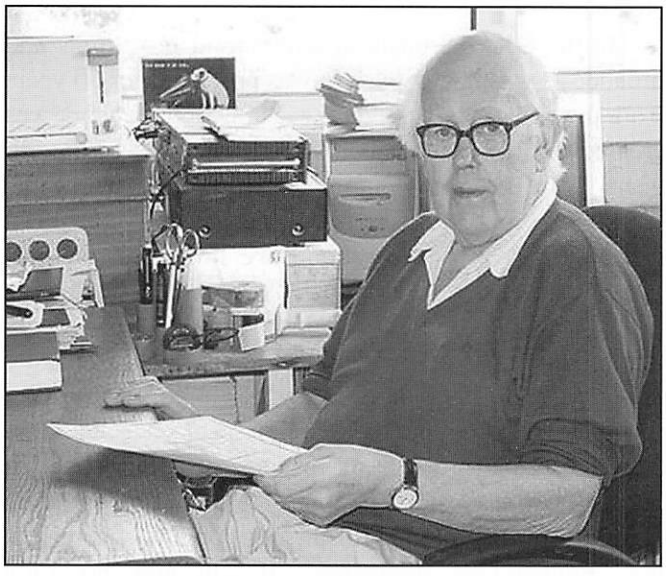
Brian Rust was the founder and until his death earlier this year at the age of 88, the leading exponent of the true art of discographical compilation. He was born in London, England on March 19, 1922. He worked for the BBC record library until 1960 and wrote both for "Melody Maker", at one time the leading British magazine covering jazz, dance and popular recordings, and "The Gramophone" the leading classical record publication.

His first discography was published in 1961 and it established the standard session-based format. In 1992, he received a lifetime achievement award from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC).

He carried out an unbelievable amount of research and published many comprehensive discographies, the most notable of which is "American Dance Bands on Record and Film (1915-1942)", earlier editions of which change hands for very considerable sums but with a new one now available, in five volumes at $125 per volume. There are many others. I assume that in working for the BBC record library he had access to most if not all of the records that he was able to list.

The pattern set by him was to list all the recordings

known of each artist, chronologically by recording sessions, showing recording venue, date, recording company, personnel, titles recorded, master or matrix numbers, takes and original issue catalogue numbers. He worked on the basis of sessions.



Brian Rust at work.

My on-line discography of Bing attempts to follow the format that Brian set though I have consciously adapted some aspects. I have not for example listed the original 78rpm catalogue numbers as I felt that for the average collector these were no longer relevant, and I have added details of modern CD re-issues because I felt that these were more helpful. Since it went on line I have received requests or comments suggesting additions in various ways and some I have been able to take on board. Specific unfulfilled requests are to list full details of all 78 rpm issues, details of LP issues and, a totally new area, video and DVD issues. I remain very reluctant to tackle 78s and LPs as I believe that the potential level of interest is very small and declining, and the information is already available elsewhere (albeit in rather aged and possibly now difficult to obtain publications). I have not been a particular collector of video material, and whilst I have most of Bing's films in some form, I have no other video material. I would be very happy to add any listing that others might be prepared to tackle to the discography, with appropriate credits, of course.

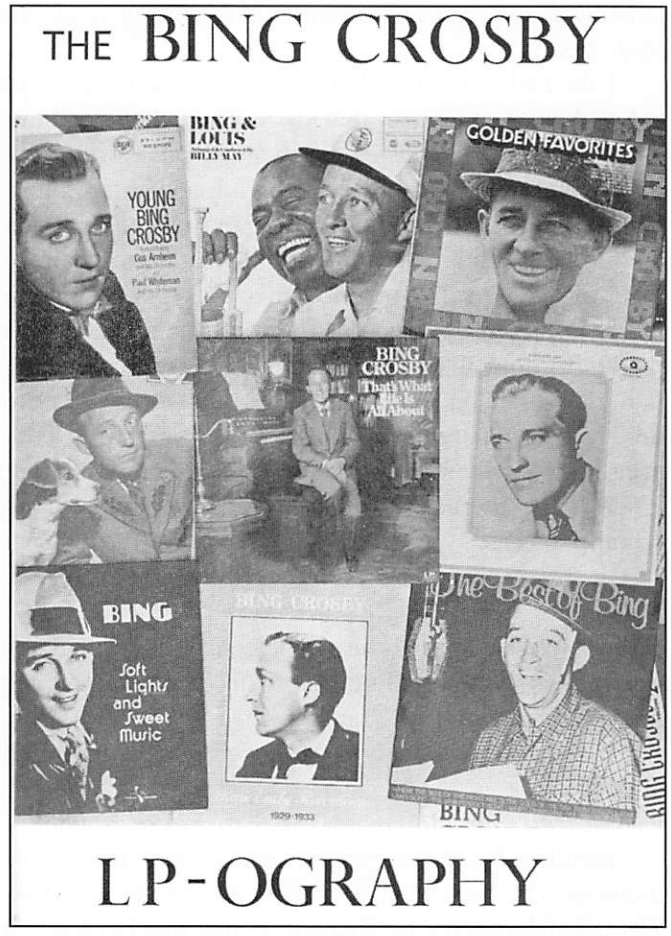
There is a school of thought that suggests that there should not be any listing by discographers of material that is "illegal" or "bootleg". I have to say that I am puzzled about this, for several reasons.

(1) If I have listed any such material it is merely as a reporter – I am certainly not advocating the issue of material that might be illegal. This begs all sorts of questions however – Just what is illegal and how is the poor discographer to distinguish? My discography is aimed at an international audience covering many different legal systems in each of which different copyright laws prevail. What is legal in one country might be illegal in another. The most obvious example, to me at least, is that, as I understand it, mechanical copyright in the U.K. currently expires after fifty years whereas in some circumstances in some states of the U.S. it might remain almost in perpetuity. The corollary, again as I understand it, is that recordings more than fifty years old, may, in the UK, be legitimately re-issued by people other than the original copyright owners.

(2) But how does one tell whether any record is legal or not? I certainly can't, let alone distinguish how it might be differently viewed in different territories. I might occasionally have suspicions, and sometimes when I have had doubts I may find a notice on the record to the effect that it is licensed. What faith can one place on such notices?

Bing himself expressed a view –

"Putting together such an LP-ography is useful in another way to me. Maybe it's a bit selfish but it gives me an opportunity to see if all these things are properly logged and if the royalties are paid to the right people. I don't know if it's happened in the United Kingdom, but it's happening in the United States and in other parts of the world where a lot of pirating has gone on."

This is part of his Introduction to "The Bing Crosby LP-Ography" by John Bassett, Colin Pugh, Ron Daniels, Ken Gray and Bert Bishop, of 1977. Bing approves!

Most avid collectors want anything and everything Bing recorded. The value to them of a discography is to discover what has been recorded and whether and where it might be available.

(4) A not wholly unconnected item appeared in the *New York Times* of 21st August 2010 which said in part, in an item about the acquisition of some old jazz recordings by the National Jazz Museum in Harlem -

"For jazz fans, nothing could be more tantalizing than the excerpts made available by the National Jazz Museum in Harlem of newly discovered recordings from the 1930s and '40s. Nearly 1,000 discs containing performances by masters like Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Billie Holiday and the long-neglected Herschel Evans suddenly re-emerged when the son of the audio engineer, William Savory, sold them to the museum....

Copyright laws are designed to ensure that authors and performers receive compensation for their labors without fear of theft and to encourage them to continue their work. The laws are not intended to provide income for generations of an author's heirs, particularly at the cost of keeping works of art out of the public's reach.

The Savory collection, like other sound recordings made before 1972, is covered by a patchwork of state copyright and piracy laws that in some cases allow copyrights to remain until the year 2067. Congress needs to bring all these recordings under the purview of federal copyright law, which generally applies during the lifetime of the author or musician plus 70 years. That time period has been criticized as too long, but is unlikely to be changed because it is part of a global trade treaty.

I do feel, strongly, that fans of any artist need to know about the works of that artist. Once they do know, if they are at all persistent in their pursuit of a decent collection, they need to be "fed" with new, different, or unusual material from time to time in order to maintain their interest. But it goes further than that because all the main works of the performer need to be kept available so far as is practical, in order that new or potential fans might be able to acquire a representative collection, rather than rely on second hand material. A corollary to this is that the representatives of the artist must do everything in their power to maintain such a state of affairs. The alternative is that the vacuum will be filled by other means.

Richard Baker

(Editor: We are very fortunate indeed that Bing Crosby Enterprises is now filling the many gaps left by the record companies.

Richard's excellent online discography can be found at:

www.jazzdiscography.com/Artists/Crosby/crosby.html

Incidentally, the copyright issue is very 'live' at the moment. The background, as indicated in the *New York Times* article quoted by Richard, is that pre-1972 sound recordings are still protected by state or common law copyright. The USA Copyright Office is now conducting a study on the desirability and means of bringing these sound recordings under federal jurisdiction. The latest step in the investigation into the subject was a roundtable discussion held in Washington on June 2 and 3, 2011, at which various parties testified. The Copyright Office is expected to issue its report to Congress by the end of 2011 on the "desirability and means" of making this change.

In the UK, the position with sound recordings and broadcasts was that copyright was protected for 50 years from the end of the calendar year in which the work was created, or, if the work is released within that time, 50 years from the end of the calendar year in which the work was first released. A major review has been undertaken by Professor Ian Hargreaves and the UK government responded to this in August. One interesting proposal was to address limited private copying. As things stand, 90 percent of the country is — mostly unwittingly — breaking the law by ripping music files from CDs and copying them to devices such as the iPod. The government said in its response that this situation "brings the law into disrepute. It is not appropriate simply to tolerate unlawful private copying where it is not commercially damaging." It will now not only legalise limited private copying, but also block any attempts in licensing contracts to undermine this new exception.

Meanwhile in Europe, the European Union Commission proposed as far back as 2008 to extend the length of the copyright on recordings to 95 years from 50 years. The European Parliament in turn modified the proposal to be 70 years instead and passed it on 23 April 2009. The remaining step to this becoming law was approval by the Council of Ministers and this took place in September this year. Without this change, the Beatles first hit, *Love Me Do* from 1962, would have gone into the public domain next year. The Rolling Stones signed with Decca Records, now part of Universal Music, the same year, and the extension will affect artists ranging from Elvis Presley to Edith Piaf. The new directive creates a fund for session musicians and introduces a "use it or lose it" clause letting artists ask for the rights back to work that producers do not make available.

Interestingly, the UK Government's Intellectual Property Office has confirmed that the Directive provides that the extended term for sound recordings and performers' rights (i.e. the 70 year period) applies to fixation of performances and phonograms which are still protected by the term Directive on the date the amending directive must be transposed and any such fixations created subsequently. So the Directive extends copyright/performers' rights protections for works where the rights are still in force on the transposition date in the directive but it does not revive copyright.

Financial experts have suggested that it is the record companies who will benefit the most rather than the artists and EMI (who hold the rights to The Beatles songs) saw their share price increase after the new directive was announced.

Alan Bunting, who for many years has carried out audio restoration and re-mastering for several of the record companies who specialise in the nostalgia market, has kept a close eye on the copyright saga and has been appalled at the mis-information and inaccurate interpretations of the Directive that have appeared in the media. In an email he went on to say:

"Each country has to ratify the Directive within two years of September 9th 2011. So, if Britain leaves it to the last minute, i.e. September 2013, recordings up to December 1962 will already be out of copyright and remain so. No doubt the record industry will be pressing the government to implement it sooner but, with so many anomalies in the Directive, sorting them out and reaching agreement on how they will work in practise makes this seem unlikely. If they do manage it in 2012 then the cut-off is December 1961 and recordings made in 1962 will have a 70 year copyright.

Unfortunately the much trumpeted "use it or lose it" clauses in the original proposal, which meant that if record companies or the artist (if they had exercised their right to acquire the copyright) didn't make recordings available to the public at the end of the first 50 year term they became Public Domain, have been changed to ensure that this won't happen and, for most recordings, the record companies will retain the copyright for the full 70 years with no obligation to make it available.")

The National Jukebox

In May, the Library of Congress launched the National Jukebox, which makes historical sound recordings available to the public free of charge. The Jukebox includes recordings from the extraordinary collections of the Library of Congress Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation and other contributing libraries and archives. Recordings in the Jukebox were issued on record labels now owned by Sony Music Entertainment, which has granted the Library of Congress a gratis license to stream acoustical recordings.

At launch, the Jukebox included more than 10,000 recordings made by the Victor Talking Machine Company between 1901 and 1925. Jukebox content will be increased regularly, with additional Victor recordings and acoustically recorded titles made by other Sony-owned U.S. labels, including Columbia, OKeh, and others. No Bing items yet though. See www.loc.gov/jukebox/ for further information.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has a supply of the book "Alternate Bing Crosby" by Colin Pugh which was published in 1988. Running to 159 pages, it gives details of the many alternate takes Bing made. If you would like a copy, send £3.50 to Michael Crampton. Europe and Ireland members should send £4.50. Also Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal figure. There are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances and Michael is offering these at the hugely discounted price of only £5.99 including postage.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD and video.

T. D. Kirk, 31 Lancaster Road, Denton M34 7JL, UK (Tel. 0161 335 9526)

For sale: 109 Bing Crosby records, v/g to mint, Jonzo, Decca, Spokane, Radiola etc. Complete set of Bing's Hollywood, some 10 inch rare USA Decca issue with The Andrews Sisters plus 4 US Decca 10 inch The Andrews Sisters £200.00 for the complete set, absolute bargain Buyer collects

Alan MacDonald, 9 Southcliff Avenue, Bexhill, East Sussex TW39 3EB, UK (tel. 01424 218905)

For sale: Bing Crosby books, compact discs and BING magazines.

Denise Morrell, telephones: Home 01484 863948, Mobile 07816130181, e-mail: m.morrell238@btinternet.com

"I am writing to find out if you know anyone who would be interested in my father's Bing Crosby collection of Sheet Music, postcards, DVD's, CD's, Vinyl, books and much, much more."

Denise's father was Peter Howard of Formby, Merseyside in the UK and he was a frequent attendee at our Leeds meeting. Contact Denise direct please for further details.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 [Tues/Wed & Fridays: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. only],
e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs, please contact Ray.

Brenda Trowell, 23 Bidwell Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN39 4DB, UK (Tel: 01424 216948)

Brenda has several items of Crosbyana for sale including books (one is "Call Me Lucky"), photos (mostly black & white), and a Palladium poster. Also other items of interest. Please send S.A.E. for list.

Worlds Records, P. O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94947, USA (phone: 1-800-742-6663) www.worldsrecords.com/

Try this company for CDs imported from the UK and elsewhere.

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Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia. (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: deryk@net2000.com.au)

The Society has been running for 34 years having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights. In August, the Crosby film was *Little Boy Lost* supported by *The Bing Crosby Show* from December 11, 1961. On October 18, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* was shown with a compilation of Busby Berkeley production numbers in support. The remaining film night planned for 2011 is on 6 December. The venue is Mamma Vittoria's, 343 Smith St. (1st floor), Fitzroy, Victoria.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains rare photos of Bing, radio shows, recordings and clips from Bing's films. The site was relaunched earlier this year and has some superb material on it.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Information taken from the book *Bing Crosby: Day By Day* is posted frequently. There is also a discussion facility.

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can be accessed. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698) website: www.intuneinternational.com)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, web page:

www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Friends of Doris Day, c/o Dr. Sue Gökgör, 71 East Avenue, Oxford OX4 1XR, UK. eMail: suegokgor@aol.com.

Started in 1997, The Friends of Doris Day is an international Doris Day appreciation club based in Oxford, UK - and the only Doris Day fan club in the UK. The club publishes three 32 page magazines a year, packed full of articles and information you won't find anywhere else, including memorabilia signed by Doris herself for auction or sale. Subscription is £16 for UK members, £21 (or equivalent in Euro or US$) for Europe, £22 (or equivalent in US$) for other countries.

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Justin Clarke, 21 Main Rd., Wetley Rocks, Stoke-On-Trent, ST9 0BH, UK (phone: 01782 551103).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK

(Web site: www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

A half-yearly newsletter is produced.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: www.jolson.org)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com ,

website: http://homepages.tesco.net/flias/)

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-317743).

A bi-monthly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is now Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

International Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

The club has been running since 1967 and membership costs £6.50 (UK), £7.50 (Europe) and $15 (USA). A quarterly newsletter is issued.

Books 'n' Bing

A Biographical Guide to the Great Jazz and Pop Singers by Will Friedwald, published by Pantheon Books; hardback $29.70 (Amazon USA), £24.80 (Amazon UK), 832 pages, ISBN-10: 0375421491, ISBN-13: 978-0375421495

There were two reasons why I bought this book. The main one was the lengthy essay on Bing Crosby. The other was the author's track record. His book "Sinatra! The Song is You: A Singer's Art" is the best study of Sinatra's recordings. It's not unlike Fred Reynolds' five volume "The Crosby Collection": it analyses the full vocal career of its subject. I also found Friedwald's writing to be objective when he co-authored "The Good Life" with Tony Bennett. Bennett has not led a blameless life and the book provided an honest biography. Most of you will also be familiar with at least a few of the liner notes he has penned for CD releases, many of them containing vocals by those featured in his new book. And lastly, if you share my affection for Hollywood cartoons from the golden age, you'll have enjoyed his three books about Warner Bros. cartoons.

How good is his "Biographical Guide"? Let's take the Crosby entry. It is factually accurate. Friedwald's opinions coincide with my own. For that entry then, ten out of ten. As far as accuracy is concerned it was never going to be an issue because the editor of this magazine cast his eye over Friedwald's essay before the book went to print. And the Bing influence is far reaching. Most of the other entries mention Bing. It is as though Crosby – and to a lesser extent Frank Sinatra – were the sounding boards (pun intended) when other vocalists were analysed.

Of course, my ability to assess the book's entries is limited to my own knowledge of the singers. The entry on Frank Sinatra is as good as the Crosby one. The entries on Perry Como and Dick Haymes are beyond criticism. There may be a reason for that. The ICC's Ken Crossland had input into the first and Ruth Prigozy assisted the Haymes entry. Both those contributors were biographers of their subject. Where Friedwald is not too familiar with his subject then the odd error occurs. His chronology on the Guy Mitchell entry is a little out. In the entry for Matt Monro, he likens Winifred Atwell to the singer-pianists Nellie Lutcher and Rose Murphy whereas she was simply a piano-player. These are trivial issues, however, because Friedwald's opinions more than compensate for minor factual errors. He knows what he doesn't like. Any book covering popular singers cannot ignore Barbra Streisand or Andy Williams. He doesn't like either of them. In the main entry for Williams we learn "Andy Williams made only a couple, of non-lousy records." Andy also comes under fire when he figures in the biographies of other singers. And poor Barbra suffers at the hands of her house painter as well as displeasing Friedwald. Hence:

> " .. [arranger-conductor Billy] Byers ... told a story about meeting a painter who was hired to paint one of Streisand's houses, a job that lasted exactly two days. 'The first day I showed her how I mix my paints and apply my brushstrokes,' the painter said, 'and the second day she showed me how to mix my paints and apply my brushstrokes.'"

For me, these strong personal opinions added to my enjoyment of the reading the book.

What can I be critical about? Well, the selection of singers maybe. No Tony Martin but Martha Raye? When I was putting together the "Celluloid Crosby" article to be found elsewhere in this issue it never occurred to me that Raye was up there with the *great* pop singers. There are many jazz singers who don't interest me but who probably warrant the adjective great. After Martha Raye in the Rs come Dianne Reeves, Irene Reid and Jimmy Rushing. But if you buy a book about both pop and jazz performers that's what you expect to find.

To buy or not to buy? Take a chance - it's almost Christmas!

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: The reviews of this magnificent tome have been very good indeed from all kinds of influential periodicals. Another review came in recently from the prestigious 'Association for Recorded Sound Collections' who have nominated the book for an award. In their spring journal 2011, Lawrence Schulman ends his very complimentary look at the book by saying:

> "...it is so enjoyable one wants the pleasure of reading it to go on forever, as if time stops while reading it. Friedwald's work, arguably his most important to date, cannot be ignored not just for its authoritative nature, but for its new slant on the art of American singing, where jazz and pop and rock and country are all to be considered by the enlightened spirit. That is, American music is like American society: a vast melting pot in which its individual contributors tear down walls by advancing the mix of all into the big stew. By his book, Friedwald has taken another step to tear down those walls.")

The Books I Read Last Summer

Martin McQuade has had a busy summer!

Wonder Girl (Dan Van Natta, Jr.; Little Brown and Co; 2011) is a biography of legendary golfer Babe Didrikson Zaharias. The author notes that her most popular charity events featured Bing and Bob Hope. "Of the two, Crosby was the better golfer – in fact, Babe called him the finest player among all the Hollywood stars." One memorable wartime moment stands apart. "At San Gabriel Country Club, Babe teamed up with Patty Berg, one of the leading amateur golfers, against Hope and Crosby. Babe smashed her drive 280 yards.

Babe with some of her trophies.

Hope fell to his knees, pounded the ground with his fists, and pretended to cry out loud. Everyone laughed. Crosby rushed over and theatrically consoled Hope. Then Crosby teed off. When his drive stopped rolling far short of Babe's roll, it was his turn to pretend to cry, with Hope rushing over to console him. The gallery loved it."

Will Rogers: A Political Life (Richard D. White, Jr.; Texas Tech University Press; 2011) informs us that in late August, 1933, at the behest of President Roosevelt, the homespun star hosted a joint CBS/NBC broadcast "to help pep things up for the National Recovery Administration." Among the guests were Eddie Cantor, Ruth Etting - and Bing.

Conversations with Scorsese (Richard Schickel; Alfred A. Knopf; 2011) includes a reflection on how the director would find boyhood refuge from the rigors of the Lower East Side in St. Patrick's Old Cathedral on Motts Street, where Irish nuns ruled. "I'd go in the church, and I became fascinated by the rituals of the Mass. It was 1949, 1950, and the image of the Catholic Church was the one from *Going My Way.* Barry Fitzgerald. Bing Crosby. Ingrid Bergman. *The Bells of St. Mary's.* You know, it was a pretty good image." One wonders if these classics motivated Scorsese to eventually join the seminary.

Scorsese's affection for the opposite persona of Bing, as exemplified in the *Road to...* pictures, is emphasized during an exchange about *Goodfellas.* "The scene that Joe Pesci asked to be put in - the 'You think I'm funny' scene – shows that you could be killed any second. They don't care who's around. The trick in the picture was to sort of ignore the danger, make it a rollicking road movie, in a way – like a kind of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby picture, with everybody on the road and having a great time."

What a Wonderful World: The Magic of Louis Armstrong's Later Years (Ricky Riccardi; Pantheon Books; 2011) chronicles an abiding friendship. During a party at Armstrong's house on New Year's Eve, 1952, a friend mentioned seeing Crosby. "Ah, give that buzzard my regards there. Shove him my regards, Daddy. That's my boy, there." Armstrong also attested at this party that Bing was helpful to Black Americans at a time when segregation was rampant. "He did as much as he could." Bing is quoted from an interview given to the BBC's 1971 series, *Satchmo: The Story of Louis Armstrong.* "Never be another like him, and never was one before in so many ways – his command of the instrument, his style, the things he could do in addition to playing the trumpet, his singing, the things he sang. They were so infectious. He was probably the most infectious performer I think I've ever seen in addition to being a genius."

Armstrong treasured the spontaneity of his broadcasts with Bing, as noted in a 1955 interview. "So much used to go on, most of our stuff was ad-libbed. That's how we got so many laughs and things. The time we were singing 'Kiss to Build a Dream On' and I just finished

my number, and he made me go up there and sing it with him and we were hamming it up some. Took up all the time doing that number with him." The author states that the lyric change from "Give me your lips for just a moment" to "Give me your chops for just a moment," was greeted by such uproarious laughter that Armstrong had to retain the new line for the rest of his career.

Armstrong also cherished the memory of *High Society*. Talking about his trombonist Trummy Young, he remembered, "Trummy mugged so much, folks. Even when the director was explaining the scene, he was mugging listening. Oh, we had the greatest laughs, everybody trying to steal scenes." The film's musical director, Johnny Green, is quoted from the aforementioned BBC series. "You talk about one big happy family, that's what it was...the easygoing Crosby and the frenetic Sinatra...and then Louis is kind of the wise grandfather of the whole thing...Louis' influence on that fun element – he's the greatest laugher in the whole world...and his sense of humor and his sense of fellowship and play...it was an incredible experience." An amusing anecdote: Armstrong was a lifelong proponent of laxatives and he tried to convert Bing during *High Society.*

Louis gives Bing a lesson on how to play his horn on the set of *High Society*.

Billy May, conductor/arranger for the LP *Bing and Satchmo* offers comment, courtesy of the BBC, about Johnny Mercer, who composed a new song and provided revised lyrics (albeit demeaned by the author) to Dixieland standards. "That was a labor of love for John, because John loved Louis, and I know he's a good friend of Bing's." May continues, "Louis was fun to work with. He enjoyed talking to the musicians. And it was old home week....Almost all the musicians...had worked with him before. And Bing of course enjoyed being around musicians. It was really a fun gig." This contradicts the assertion that Bing and Louis recorded their vocals to pre-recorded tracks.

In 1971 Armstrong acknowledged his diminished powers after appearing with Bing on *The David Frost Show*, complaining "my chops are dry." Several months later, Bing wrote this note to Armstrong's widow, Lucille. "The too infrequent times I spent in his company were joyous experiences and I know of no man for whom I had more admiration and respect. He was a true genius, and more."

Bob Dylan in America (Sean Willentz; Doubleday; 2010) provides chapter and verse to the troubadour's allegiance to Bing. "Dylan's musical thinking...ranged far beyond the folk and country music with which he was most closely associated. 'Sinatra. Peggy Lee, yeah, I love all those people,' he informed an interviewer in 1985. 'But I tell you who I've really been listening to a lot lately – in fact, I'm thinking about recording one of his earlier songs – is Bing Crosby. I don't think you can find better phrasing anywhere." The author is compelled to note the obligatory astonishment at such a claim. "Dylan's loyal fans may have taken his praise of 'Der Bingle' as a goof, but he was deadly in earnest." (A photo of Bing in blackface from *Dixie* is oddly used to illustrate the page.)

Specifics are given to underline Dylan's fondness for Bing. His 2001 album, *Love and Theft,* features a song, "Floater (Too Much to Ask)" which was modeled after one of Dylan's favorite Crosby records: "Snuggled on Your Shoulder," from 1932. Dylan's 2006 album, *Modern Times* includes a song "When the Deal Goes Down," a reworking of "Where the Blue of the Night (Meets the Gold of the Day)." Furthermore, his *Christmas in the Heart*, released in 2009, is comprised of three Crosby chestnuts ("I'll Be Home for Christmas," Silver Bells," and "Do You Hear What I Hear"). "In all, thirteen of the fifteen songs on the album were also recorded by Crosby."

Sinatra: Hollywood His Way (Timothy Knight; Running Press; 2010) is an overview of the star's film career. The downplaying of Crosby, a necessity for so many zealous Sinatra hagiographers, is to be found here. Although Crosby is given his due throughout this coffee-table book, the author just could not resist this spurious claim. "With the possible(?) exception of his idol, Bing Crosby, no other singer has ever enjoyed more lasting crossover on the big screen than Sinatra. Or courted public rejection by tackling challenging, image-busting roles in provocative roles.

Just try to imagine Presley or Crosby stepping into Sinatra's role as a would-be presidential assassin in *Suddenly* in 1954. It's doubtful that audiences would buy either of them as the paranoid war veteran holding a family hostage, whereas Sinatra is eerily persuasive in the role." The author must be unaware of Crosby's unorthodox dramatic portrayal in *Dr. Cook's Garden* of a small town practitioner of euthanasia. Could Sinatra have essayed this offbeat role as chillingly and convincingly as Bing? The question is moot.

The Man Who Invented Rock Hudson: The Pretty Boys and Dirty Deals of Henry Willson (Robert Hofler; Carroll & Graf; 2005) explores the life of the controversial Hollywood power broker/press agent. His staunch supporter is Carol Lee Ladd Veitch, the stepdaughter of Alan Ladd. In 1933 the one year old was with her mother Sue Carol on a cruise liner, heading from New York to the West Coast by way of Latin America. Veitch recalls, "My mother was traveling with Dixie Lee Crosby at the time. That's where they met Harry, and the three of them became very close friends." Shortly after they arrived at the Long Beach port, the ladies threw a party to introduce Willson to their tinsel town friends. (Here we are mistakenly informed that Bing had joined the elite by playing himself in several Paramount musicals.) Friendship with Dixie led to Willson's first assignment for *Photoplay*, an encounter with the new-born Gary Crosby, described by the author as "the infant prop for an 'as told to' article complete with photograph of adoring interviewer on his hands and knees in front of his oblivious subject." Willson wrote, "I was ushered into the spacious nursery where Gary Evans Crosby, aged 6 months, received me with all the pomp and splendor that could be expected from a young man of his age – perched in a dignified manner in the center of the floor with one toe in his mouth... "What can I do for you?" inquired the starlet, in a deep baritone voice that assured me I was in the right household." Well, Mr. Crosby..."

An oblique addition to "Bing on the soundtrack" appears in *Five Star Final* (Warner Brothers, 1931) in which just the orchestral portion of Gus Arnheim's jazzy recording of "One More Time" is used as background for a dramatic scene. Quite a curious omission of Bing's electrifying vocal!

Martin McQuade

MARGHANITA LASKI: 1915 - 1988

Michael Collins reflects on the long forgotten writer who wrote *Little Boy Lost*, amongst other books, together with some thoughts on changing literary fashions.

In that part of Mayfair where Curzon Street bends around in the direction of South Audley Street, and leads to points north, there is an obscure little bookshop, which might go unnoticed were it not for the familiar blue plaque on the wall, so prevalent in this part of London, calling one's attention to the fact that Diana Mitford once worked there. This was during the War years from 1942 to 1946. It was a brisk, fresh morning in early April when I happened to be in the vicinity. Londoners and many visitors were out and about, no doubt eagerly anticipating the Royal Wedding which was to take place later in the month.

Curiosity got the better of me and I decided on impulse to pay a brief visit. Rare as it is for any shop right in the heart of London not to have its generous quota of customers browsing around and examining the wares, this one was completely empty, and would remain so for the twenty minutes or more I spent searching through its well ordered stock of mainly second-hand books. Unlike the weather outside, trade inside was not exactly brisk. With its distinctly old fashioned furniture and creaking floor boards, it drew me into a sort of time warp, a state quite conducive to conjuring up the ghosts of those memorable wartime years. Indeed, as the present proprietor told me, the place had hardly changed since Miss Mitford worked there. I could well believe it.

As I surveyed the lines of neatly arranged books set out on a large table in the centre of the room, my eyes were drawn to a shelf of what appeared to be uniform editions over to my right just by the door. The names on the spines, mainly though not exclusively those of women writers, were for the most part unfamiliar. This particular publisher (Persephone Books), I was later to learn, specialized in reissuing neglected classics. Some names, such as Christine Longford, Richmal Crompton and Leonard Woolf, were admittedly quite well known, but in another context and for a very different kind of book. The name which immediately leapt out at me was that of Marghanita Laski. She was someone whom I well recall from my own younger days, not as a writer but as a broadcaster. Throughout the nineteen fifties, she was a regular participant on BBC radio, especially in programmes such as *The Brains Trust* and *Any Questions.* I am sure that other readers will likewise remember her, together with the indomitable Baroness Stocks, but for all that she remains a figure long forgotten by the public at large.

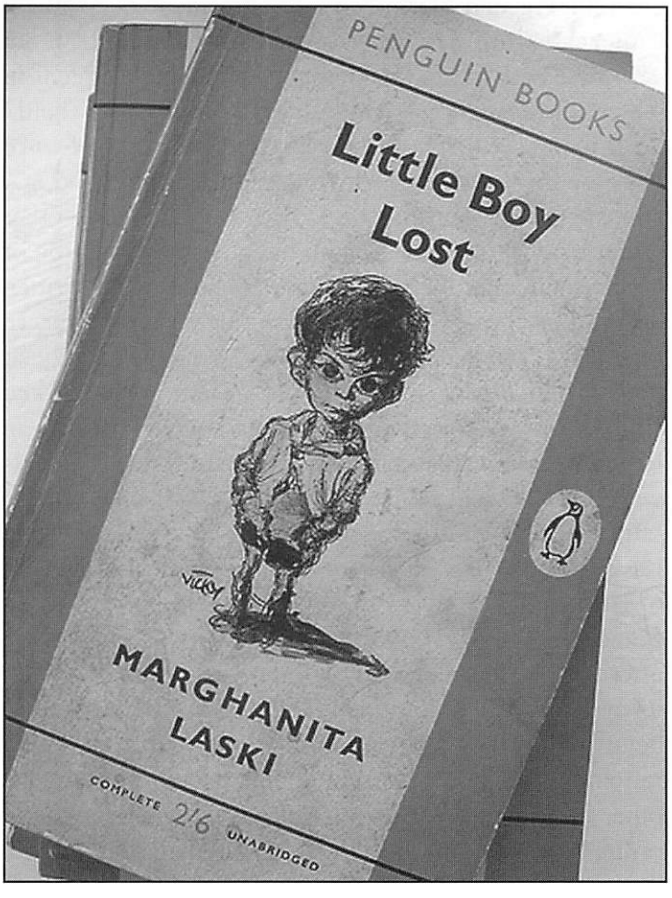
A woman of formidable intellect, she was born in Manchester of Jewish parents and was the niece of the famous British Socialist, Harold Laski, who was to become professor of political science at the London School of Economics. She read English at Somerville College, Oxford and later became a journalist and writer. Persephone books have reissued four of her novels to date. Fortunately for me, the one that was on the shelf that day at the Heywood Bookshop was none other than *Little Boy Lost.* It took less than a second's hesitation for

me to snap up this elusive item. Later, when I got home and had a chance to examine my precious find, I could only marvel at how well it was produced with its dove-grey dust jacket, ornate end papers and matching bookmark. It may not have qualified as a hardback exactly but, whatever it is, one has to concede that it was a deluxe edition and a fitting tribute to this fine writer.

Having decided to bypass the main text for the moment, I went straight to the *Afterword* which was written by Anne Sebba, a writer new to me. I scanned through the opening paragraphs and wondered whether she had anything to say about the movie version which was released in 1953. On the very last page there was, indeed, a reference to it though not one which was very complimentary to Bing. Quoting from *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Ms Sebba relates how, shortly after publication, Marghanita Laski sold the film rights but was "furious and hurt" [DNB] when four years later it was turned into a musical starring Bing Crosby. I imagine that most readers of this magazine will be surprised to find the film referred to as a musical. True, Bing did sing a couple of songs but fewer even than he sang in *Country Girl*, a movie which is generally categorized as straight drama. A little taken aback, I decided to consult the BBC online edition of *Radio Times* which, notwithstanding the title, has perhaps the most perceptive and discriminating collection of film reviews available on the Internet. There, I was reassured to see it described definitively as a non-musical and to discover, in addition, that it received a creditable review with special praise for the lead player who "acquits himself admirably."

Nor is it likely that Ms Sebba ever consulted Fred Reynolds's comprehensive appraisal of Bing Crosby's films, *The Road to Hollywood.* Had she done so, she would have learnt that, although Miss Laski was initially concerned to find that Hilary Wainwright, a sensitive and troubled British intellectual, should be transformed into a "singing American" (albeit a working journalist), she changed her mind after seeing the film and admitted that "Crosby had done an admirable job in a demanding role." That said, I was much impressed by Anne Sebba's thoughtful and penetrating analysis of Laski's novel. I partly agree with her that the serious moral issues raised in the novel and which she herself examines in such commendable detail "were inevitably devalued by a version that focused only on a father's search for his son". More about that later. For the moment, suffice it to say that one can think of a number of film directors who might successfully have tackled such complex and challenging imponderables in celluloid format, but you were unlikely to find them in Hollywood or anywhere near it. Besides, the end-product would then be an altogether different kind of film, more suited to the art house than for general distribution. The box office returns, moreover, would also be substantially reduced. Prestigious, as somebody once wrote, does not bring home the moolah or pay the bills.

Upon examining the book, I took special note of three familiar names (two of them in the *Afterword),* all in some way connected with this publication. The thought that instantly occurred to me was how ironic that each one is far better known today than that of Marghanita Laski. The first belongs to the cartoonist, Vicky, whose drawing of the elusive Boubou, Hilary's putative son, which was specially commissioned for the original edition, is used here as the frontispiece. The child eventually turns up at a Catholic orphanage and there given the name, Jean. Hilary's immediate impression is of a small, pale-faced child with unkempt hair falling over "enormous dark eyes which stared back imploringly into his."



Vicky's depiction of the child's appearance is not so much a portrait as a caricature, but here it is absolutely perfect and entirely appropriate. He was born in Germany of Hungarian Jewish parents before coming to England where he made his name as a political cartoonist. Together with his near contemporary, the New Zealander, David Low, the pair grew to be as famous in their adopted country as, say, Thurber or Charles Adams were to become in the United States. The second was that of the poet, Stevie Smith, a more familiar figure in her native England than she was in America though she did have quite an influence on Sylvia Plath. It should also be noted that an excellent biopic, *Stevie*, made in 1978 and starring Glenda Jackson, has been shown on American cable television.

Her name crops up here because of a sympathetic review she gave the novel, as does that of the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen. What a strange reversal of fortune! Three ancillary talents, two reviewers and an illustrator, each of whom has stood the test of time far better than the original author. The last mentioned, Elizabeth Bowen, demands special attention for a variety of reasons. Before we get to that, I ought to mention, if only in passing, two Irish writers, Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain, both of whom were acknowledged experts on the short story (a genre in which Elizabeth Bowen also excelled), both of whom were also widely read in French and Russian literature, and who not only knew Bowen personally but have written extensively on this highly-regarded author. What they had to say more than half a century ago undoubtedly influenced later scholars and critics, notably the biographers, Victoria Glendinning and Hermione Lee, President of Wolfson College, Oxford. These two are considered writers of the very first rank, an index, perhaps, of the high esteem in which this exceptional Anglo-Irish woman is now held.

Literary critics have long praised her novel *Heat of the Day* for the way in which it captured the mood and atmosphere of wartime London better than any other writer has managed to do with the possible exception of Graham Greene. Although some chapters were written during those years, it was not completed until later. In fact, it was published in 1949, which was the same year that *Little Boy Lost* came out. There are marked similarities in both works. Bowen's novel begins in Regents Park on a late September day in 1942. She deals with that darkest middle period of the war between the fall of France and the opening up of the Second Front. Laski's book also opens in London one year later, on Christmas Day, 1943, though it quickly switches to France just a few years on, to a country now in the aftermath of that same war which is trying to deal with its own physical and moral collapse. Each book deals in detail with the deprivation and austerity, the food rationing and other shortages, the one in France, the other in England, which so preoccupied the thoughts of ordinary people as they went about their daily lives. Espionage together with betrayal and treachery form a substratum to both novels. Hilary Wainwright worked as a liaison officer to a French battalion and in that capacity worked closely with the French resistance fighters. In Bowen's novel, we see the same thing at work though from the opposite end of the spectrum. Stella Rodney's lover, Robert Kelway, it transpires, is a spy selling secrets from the War Office to the enemy.

Professor Stephen Wall describes Elizabeth Bowen as belonging to a tradition "in which a tense, even tremulous, sensibility is combined with an awareness of the large moral implications of private actions" [Sphere *History of Literature: vol.7]*. Such awareness is also there in the earlier part of Miss Laski's novel though it eventually devolves into a more personal dilemma which is to search for a child out of an obligation to his wife, Lisa, who was executed by the Gestapo, to search for him alone and not to be led by a misplaced sense of pity to take what was on offer at the orphanage, a child which arguably may not have been his at all. Their themes may overlap, but there the resemblance ends. Their styles of writing are poles apart. Hermione Lee and Victoria Glendinning both take Miss Bowen to task for her contortions, her inversions, strange double negatives and broken sentences though they also allow that these are often necessary to convey the fractured dislocation of a people involved in a terrifying war. Daniel George, the reader at Jonathan Cape, was continually picking out and editing the more egregious of these inversions. One which she did not amend ran: 'Absolutely', he said with fervour, 'not'. To which George responded, 'Far, I diffidently suggested, fetched.'

It is a style of writing which Cyril Connolly, in his landmark *Enemies of Promise* [1937] describes as "mandarin". That is to say, fine writing which is stylistically self-conscious and highly mannered, as opposed to the more workmanlike prose of Hemingway, Maugham and George Orwell. In my Penguin edition, I notice, he includes Bowen among the mandarins. It contrasts sharply with the clear, limpid prose of Miss Laski. I recently reread *The Heat of the Day* and, while it stands up well to the passage of time, I have to concede that it is far from user friendly. All her books demand close concentration. One exasperated reader complained that it took her two pages to draw the curtains at the flat in Weymouth Street where the two lovers met. Even Henry James at his most prolix was not that irritating. James is often cited as influencing Elizabeth Bowen, a comparison which made Miss Bowen herself distinctly uneasy.

Another major difference in the methods employed by both novelists is seen in the way that Marghanita Laski continually moves the narrative forward and at a great pace. The Guardian critic, Nicholas Lezard, who reviewed the novel when it was reissued a decade ago, wrote that it "has the page-turning compulsion of a thriller while at the same time being written with perfect

clarity and precision." I fully agree and would go even further by saying that she sustains the suspense until quite *literally* the closing sentence of the book. Even the most finely crafted Agatha Christie does not place the denouement in the very last line. By contrast, Bowen's classic novel is not, according to Hermione Lee, "allowed to be a suspense story…What is in suspense is not plot but psychology…[*Elizabeth Bowen* revised edition 1999]. It is at this point that I would part company with the analysis of Anne Sebba. Laski's "traitor emotions of love and tenderness", not to mention "pity", that equivocal, cloven-hoofed sentiment which Graham Greene found so suspect, are all well and good for purposes of lit. crit., but one really wonders as to how big a part they played in the minds of her readers who were caught up in the driving narrative force of her compelling story. A far greater proportion of that book is taken up with the mechanics of the search than Ms Sebba allows. I should also add here that these are intellectual concepts whereas film is a visual medium and, though any critique of the movie is beyond the scope of this article, I think that in its concentration on that search, it is true to the spirit of much of the book. Certain sections of the film, such as the performance of the brilliant French actress, Gabrielle Dorziat, as the Mother Superior at the orphanage, are remarkably faithful to the text.

Gabrielle Dorziat explains her problems to Bing.

The *Telegraph* critic, Sarah Crompton, consulted, as I did, *The Oxford Companion to Literature* only to find that Miss Laski does not even merit a one-line entry. Ultimately, she classifies her as a superior bestseller. Although popular music is more vulnerable to the ebb and flow of fashion than any other art form (with the single exception of *haute couture* where fashion itself is of the very essence), no art form, even in its higher echelons, is entirely immune. The recently deceased Francis King cites two novelists, Angus Wilson and C. P. Snow (both major figures in my youth) who are now almost forgotten. Yet, he reminds us in his autobiography that "the reputation of all writers, even those of the stature of Conrad, Woolf and Kipling, go up and down like yo-yos". We should also remember that the pendulum swings. Many of us still recall the revolution at the Royal Court when John Osborne and 'the angry young men' banished traditional craftsmen such as Rattigan and Coward to the outer darkness, seemingly for all time. George Bernard Shaw himself was looking distinctly pass . One could never have foreseen that the most fashionable London playwright of the present season is none other than the once despised Terence Rattigan. As the poet wrote, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Michael Collins

(Editor: In July, there was a related thread on the Crosby Fan World site started off by ***Steve Fay*** *who wrote:*

"My first viewing of "Little Boy Lost," a personal response.

I am still a bit stunned, the film having concluded moments ago. I had read a bit about it a few times before, but did not realize how powerful of an effect it would have. In its dramatic weight it reminds me somewhat of "The Country Girl," this partly also because Bing's character is not altogether sympathetic at times."

I added the comment:

"The ending never fails to move me to tears."

Steve responded with:

"I've watched it now a second time, and it did it again. I think part of it is that, despite moments of hope (some of which prove to be false) the connection between Bing's character, Bill Wainwright, and the boy, Jean, is so tenuous and then finally looks very likely to fail so near the end of the movie. That Bill returns to the orphanage ready to claim the boy without knowing for sure if he is his son, at the very time the boy has a genuine memory proving he is his son —- well, it's quite a one-two punch to the viewer's heart."

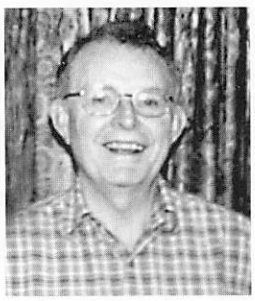
Richard Baker *joined the discussion with:*

Steve, you have captured the feel of the film very well. A bit of a new departure for Bing - out with the old with the light banter and asides, the fluffy storylines and the knockabouts with Bob, in with a more considered, mature and moving storyline. A deft re-working of the cliffhanger - will they won't they (be rescued/meet again/make it up/find the right partners) transposed to the question of the boy's identity, and then placed on a piece of elastic that keeps on snapping away. And of course followed a year later by 'The Country Girl'. A film not all that frequently shown, and I don't think currently available on DVD (though beware, there seems to be another of the same name). It should be available (perhaps with a pack of tissues).

Dieter Beier *commented:*

Little Boy Lost is my personally favourite dramatic Crosby movie, This Crosby film is much underrated in my mind. I have viewed it at least ten times completely.)

Celluloid Crosby



I'm going to visit three films made over a period of fourteen months which have one performer in common. The impressive profile of the actress's achievements poses the question why she is not as well remembered as her contemporaries. There is no easy answer. She had four careers. She started in vaudeville. When she graduated to films it was Bing's Paramount pictures which made her known internationally. When her Hollywood career petered out she found herself becoming a household name on American television in the 1950s. Then, when it should have been all over, she "did a Jolson" and enjoyed renewed popularity entertaining U.S. servicemen. Here are a few clues just in case you haven't been able to identify her so far:

- She was born in 1916. Her birth certificate recorded her name as Margy Reed
- Her stage act involved singing, dancing and mimicking the voice of Ethel Merman
- Her most important film role came in 1947 when Charlie Chaplin cast her in a leading role in *Monsieur Verdoux*
- She was married seven times
- She entertained U.S. troops in Europe in WWII, Korea and in Vietnam from the latter part of the 1960s and was honored with an Academy Award as the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award recipient for her volunteer efforts and services to the troops
- Bob Hope said of her "she was Florence Nightingale, Dear Abby and the only singer who could be heard over the artillery fire"
- Drugs and alcohol blighted her later career
- She died in 1994 following the amputation of both legs

She was Martha Raye,

Her film career began in 1936 when she was cast as Emma Mazda in *Rhythm on the Range.* Her billing in the film below Bing, Frances Farmer and Bob Burns reflected her belated appearance in the film when the plot was well underway. That was partly down to last minute casting. She was appearing on stage at the Trocadero in Los Angeles when Norman Taurog caught her act. He'd already been signed to direct *Rhythm on the Range.* He was sufficiently impressed to persuade Benjamin Glazer, the film's producer, to sign her to a contract and shoe-horn her into the Crosby picture. The surrounding publicity cited a $1,300 per week salary. That was as suspect as the story put out by Paramount that the film's four screenplay writers came up with a part for her within 24 hours. Nor could it have been easy for her to learn her lines quickly. She was semi-literate and had to commit her role to memory by having her lines read to her. Once on set, she soon settled into her singing/acting part. She said that Bing quickly put her at ease and she also knew Bob Burns, who was also making his film debut. She had been on the same vaudeville bill as Burns some twelve years previously. When the film was released, most favourable critical comment about her performance made mention of the song "Mister Paganini" which she sings in the campfire sequence towards the end of the picture. She made a best selling recording of it for Decca and "Mister Paganini" became her signature song. Martha Raye had arrived in Hollywood and Paramount quickly capitalised on her successful debut by finding parts for her in three further films over a four month period before casting her to appear in her second film with Bing.

Waikiki Wedding, filmed over the winter of 1936/37 and released in March, 1937, saw Martha Raye in a role more integral to the story than was the case in her debut film. She was Myrtle Finch, the friend of Pineapple Girl contest winner Georgia Smith (Shirley Ross).

There were production similarities with *Rhythm on the Range.* Again fourth billed she was in the familiar company of Bing and Bob Burns. And again she was provided with a strident vocal solo towards the end of the film when she extolled the virtues of "Okolehao", a strong alcoholic beverage enjoyed by the native Hawaiians. Leo Rainger and Ralph Robin were hired by Paramount to provide songs but they enlisted the aid of screenwriter/gagman Don Hartman to help out with the lyrics of Raye's one song. Bing had two duets in the film, both with Shirley Ross: "Blue Hawaii" and "Sweet Is the Word for You". *Waikiki Wedding* premiered at the Waikiki Theatre in March of 1937, one month after filming ended. The serious critics reacted as expected to a lightweight musical. The most influential of these was Frank Nugent of the *New York Times.* He'd already referred to Raye as "the lusty lark of Paramount's roster

of curiosa". Although he was unimpressed with *Waikiki Wedding* ("the fabric has been stretched so that it has to burst in places") he heralded the performance of "Miss Raye of the elastic mouth, the rubbery legs and the amazing holler". Once again the studio recognised that Martha Raye was maintaining her box-office pull and quickly cast her in two more films before her final cinematic bout with Bing.

Martha gets friendly with her leading man in *Double or Nothing*

Double or Nothing went before the cameras just about three months after *Waikiki Wedding*. This time Martha Raye was third billed as Liza Lou Lane. Bing's leading lady was Mary Carlisle. Raye's part was once more to provide comedy relief but her place in the cast list showed she had a more substantial part written for her. She was also given two song solos. They were "It's On, It's Off", written by Sam Coslow and Al Siegel and "Listen My Children, and You Shall Hear", by Ralph Freed and Burton Lane. And this time she shared some screen time singing with Bing. It was the inconsequential "After You". It featured in the film in a scene set in Bing's nightclub and Raye received vocal support from Bing, Frances Faye and Harry Barris. Raye never had the opportunity of sharing a duet with Bing in the three films they were in together. Bing could adjust his singing style to fall in with any vocal partner but Martha Raye's style would have presented him with an almost insurmountable task. Almost, because they did manage it once on a July, 1936 Kraft Music Hail broadcast when they sang "I'm an Old Cowhand (from the Rio Grande)" in a show promoting *Rhythm on the Range* at the time of the film's imminent nationwide release in the U.S.A. When *Double or Nothing* was released there was a realisation that over a period of a year and a half Martha Raye had made her mark. She no longer needed a Crosby picture to bring her to the attention of moviegoers. One reviewer wrote: "Martha Raye is fast building up her own following and will gather more fans unto herself in this part, even though it is a trite one." W.E. Oliver of the *Los Angeles Evening Herald Express* registered that Raye was capable of going it alone and said she "gets more of a chance to do her regular stuff."

And for the next half dozen years she did her regular stuff. But she never managed to shake off the fact that she was seemingly employed as comic relief. Paramount was reluctant to take a chance on developing whatever acting skills may be lurking beneath the brash comedy exterior. She moved to Universal for four films and she was then cast midway down the cast list on a couple for 20th Century-Fox. So it came as a surprise to many that Chaplin used her in *Monsieur Verdoux*. She proved she could forge a career as a straight actress even though the film relied on her comedic talents. Archer Winsten of the *New York Post* observed, "only raucous Martha Raye holds her own. Her bull in a china shop personality is a perfect contrast to Chaplin's very precision." The film played in New York for six weeks before Chaplin fell foul of pressure groups that disliked his communist leanings. What could have been a launching pad for substantial supporting roles for Raye led nowhere. Instead she signed with the William Morris Agency and formed a nightclub act with her then current husband Nick Condos. Her film career was at an end. There were only four films over the next forty plus years. Her final screen appearance was in *"The Concorde: Airport '79"*. It was the fourth and last of the *Airport* series. She played a passenger with a weak bladder, forever visiting the ladies' room. "It's almost the story of my life", she told reporters.

As was often the case, performers whose film careers were at an end found a welcome in the nation's living rooms. Audiences who no longer went to the cinema on a regular basis obtained their entertainment fix from television. On January 23, 1954, "The Martha Raye Show" began a Saturday evening peak time run. The one-hour show switched to alternate Tuesdays in late 1954 and ran until 1956 when cancellation was attributed to the conditions of the "morals" clause in her contract having been breached. This followed criticism of the dubious material and double entendre jokes that

were part of her nightclub act. There was also bad press because she was conducting an affair with her next husband-to-be whilst still married to Nick Condos.

Raye toured with Bob Hope when he took his show to the U.S. troops serving abroad. When there was a Bob Hope television special in February 1969 both Bing and Raye were guests, although they did not appear together on screen. The last time the two met was under almost tragic circumstances. On March 3rd, 1977 Bing was at Ambassador College in Pasadena for the recording of a programme celebrating his fifty years in showbusiness. Martha Raye was one of more than a dozen guests assembled to mark the occasion. Bing fell into the pit orchestra and Raye's limited nursing experience resulted in her being at his side after the fall and then accompanying him when he was taken to hospital. Her own career had more or less wound down by then but she kept busy and enjoyed some success as a member of *4 Girls 4* with Rosemary Clooney, Kay Starr and Helen O'Connell. She made appearances in several television films and many on-going series as well as guesting on chat shows. It took a marriage to Mark Harris to see her back in the headline news. He was forty-two and she was seventy-five. The wedding ceremony took place in Las Vegas in September, 1991. She was wheelchair bound by then.

Martha Raye was never a really big star in vaudeville, films, television or nightclubs. In the entertainment league tables she probably hovered around the top of the second division for about forty years. She could sing and dance but her looks - especially her big mouth - destined her to be a comedienne rather than be taken seriously. There is no doubt that her career was kickstarted by the three Crosby films she made during the span of a year and a half towards the end of the 1930s. Without that boost it could be argued that she might not have made the progress in showbusiness which she did.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS

Song. Its unlikely staging on film was in the Sennett short *One More Chance* (1931), when Bing sang it to a gathering of American Indians. That sequence was used in the 1946 compilation *Road to Hollywood.* Ted Koehler provided lyrics to the music of Billy Moll and Harry Barris. Bing recognised its importance as part of his early repertoire. He first recorded it at the time he was working for Sennett, re-recorded it in 1939 and then included a new version for his 1954 musical autobiography.

Bing attempts to soothe the native Americans

WRIGHT, WILL (1894-1962) Character actor. Will Wright played a brief but essential role in *Road to Utopia* (1946). He was Latimer, the gold prospector who, in a flashback at the start of the film, was shot and robbed of the map which showed the location of the Klondike gold mine. He had what amounted to an anonymous presence in memorable films such as *Adam's Rib* (1949) and *The Wild One* (1952).

WYMAN, JANE [born Sarah Jane Mayfield, later known as Sarah Jane Fulks] (1917-2007) Actress. She was Bing's leading lady in two consecutive Paramount features. For *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) she played Emmadel Jones. Bing and Jane marry in the end. Director Frank Capra said of her, "Much to my delight I discovered that Jane Wyman - short nose, long legs, big heart, and all talent - had a rarely used flair for singing and dancing...I had to have a great song for Jane to do with Bing." That great song turned out to be "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening." Then, in *Just for You* (1952) she was Carolina Hill. Bing and Jane plan to marry in the end. Although not primarily a vocalist she sang in both films. In fact, it was as a vocalist that she made her show business debut. As Jane Durrell her first career in the early 1930s was as a radio singer. When she made her films with Bing she had just divorced Ronald Reagan. She said he talked too much. Her first uncredited screen appearance as a teenager was in *The Kid from Spain* (1932) and she went on to have small parts in a number of films including Bing's film *Anything Goes* which was made in 1935 when she played a chorus girl. The parts gradually grew more substantial and in 1936 she signed a contract with Warner Bros. Pictures which led to another name change, the more familiar one of Jane Wyman. Under that name she appeared in "A" and "B" pictures at Warners, including two with her future husband,

Ronald Reagan: *Brother Rat* (1938) and its sequel, *Baby Be Good* (1940). Her best years were the ten between 1945, when she proved her acting talent in *The Lost Weekend* and 1954, when she received an Oscar nomination for her part in *Magnificent Obsession.* During that time span she portrayed an Academy Award winning deaf-mute in *Johnny Belinda* (1948) and received a further Academy Award nomination for her part in *The Blue Veil* in 1951. Her final big screen appearance was in the 1969 film *How to Commit Marriage.* When Hollywood film roles failed to attract her she embarked on phase three of her show business career on television and achieved new fame as Angela Channing in *Falcon Crest.*

WYNN, KEENAN [Francis Xavier Aloysius Wynn] (1916-1986) Actor. His main Crosby film link was *Stagecoach* (1966) in which he played Luke Plummer. Plummer was the reason the Ringo Kid was travelling on the stagecoach to Cheyenne: the Kid wanted to settle old scores and Plummer and his two sons were in Cheyenne. Wynn was also in *Angels in the Outfield* (1951) and *Cancel My Reservation* (1972) in both of which Bing made fleeting appearances. The Wynn show business dynasty seemingly started with his grandfather, silent film actor Frank Keenan. Keenan's father was actor Ed Wynn and his own son is screenwriter Tracy Keenan Wynn. Lovers of screen musicals will remember Keenan Wynn for his performances in *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), *Kiss Me Kate* (1953) and *Finian's Rainbow* (1968).

YA GOT LOVE Song. Three people, Ed Nelson, Al Hoffman and Al Goodhart, wrote the song and three vocalists, The Rhythm Boys, sang it in *Confessions of a Co-ed* (1931). No studio recording was made by Bing or the Boys.

YA GOTTA GIVE THE PEOPLE HOKE Song. For the 1956 "remake" of *Anything Goes* Sammy Cahn and James Van Heusen supplemented the film's Cole Porter compositions with decidedly inferior material. "Ya Gotta Give the People Hoke" was one example of instantly forgettable versus Porter evergreen standard. Bing and Donald O'Connor opened the film's musical repertoire with a performance of the song.

YELLEN, JACK (1892-1991) Lyric writer. Bing sang three Jack Yellen-Milton Ager songs in *King of Jazz* (1930). "Music Hath Charms" was featured behind the film's opening titles, "A Bench in the Park" had vocals shared amongst the Rhythm Boys, the Brox Sisters and others and "Happy Feet" was a Rhythm Boys number. In addition, Bing was down to perform "The Song of the Dawn", also written by Yellen and Ager for the film. Bing was in a prison cell at the time the sequence was filmed and John Boles was assigned the song. It is always interesting to note how lyric writers who came to the U.S.A. from non-English speaking countries soon mastered the American idioms. Jack Yellen was born in Poland and was turning out hits like "Louisville Lou", "I Wonder What's Become of Sally" and "Ain't She Sweet" before he reached the age of thirty.

YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD Short film. This was a one reel short made for the Christophers' Association in 1951. The Christophers believed that if highly principled individuals were in positions of influence they could counter the ills perpetrated by the likes of Adolf Hitler. The film is a strong propaganda piece intended to be shown to interested groups as an alternative to a lecture by the Christophers' Association. The action is set in the home of Jack Benny and Benny's guests Paul Douglas, Loretta Young, Irene Dunne and Ann Blyth assemble to listen to a member of the Association extol its virtues. Towards the end of the film Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, (Benny's butler), introduces songwriters Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, who are closely followed by Bing. Crosby then proceeds to sing the song "Early American" to the assembled entertainers. The film was directed by Leo McCarey and produced by William Perlberg. Recommended for insomniacs.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW THE LANGUAGE Song. In *Road to Rio* (1948), Bing is a member of a band on board ship when he sings this Burke-Van Heusen composition as part of the ship's concert with The Andrews Sisters.

YOU KEEP COMING BACK LIKE A SONG Song. It seems appropriate that an Irving Berlin composition entitled "You Keep Coming Back Like a Song" should be the only song in *Blue Skies* (1946) film which receives a Crosby reprise. We first hear Bing singing it at his new night club and he revisits it at the film's end when he is re-united with Joan Caulfield.

YOU LUCKY PEOPLE YOU Song. Bing's vocal of this Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen song can be part heard over the opening credits to *Road to Zanzibar* (1941). The film's opening sequence is set in a carnival and an audience assembles as Bing lets them know how lucky they are prior to firing 'Fearless' Frazier - from a cannon. Of course, it is Bob Hope who happens to be the 'live' ammunition. It was around this time that British comedian Tommy Trinder adopted "You lucky people" as his catch phrase and I often wonder if this song was the inspiration.

YOU TELL ME YOUR DREAM Song. This melodic song written by Gus Kahn and Neil Moret is heard in *High Time* (1960). Introduced in an ideal setting on a hayride, Bing and Nicole Maurey are joined on vocals by a group of students. A marriage proposal follows (by Miss Maurey to Mr. C!)

YOUNG, JOE [Joseph]. (1889-1939) Lyric writer who also sang. Joe Young contributed three times to

Bing's early film career. A parody of "Snuggled on Your Shoulder", written together with Carmen Lombardo, was featured in the concluding footage of the Mack Sennett short *Sing, Bing, Sing* (1932) as Bing literally took flight with his girl. The same year, when Bing headed the cast list of *The Big Broadcast*, he sang a few lines of the Sam Lewis, Joe Young, Harry Akst composition "Dinah". Then, for the short *Just an Echo* (1933), Young and Lombardo teamed up once again for "You're Beautiful Tonight, My Dear", which Bing sang on film and recorded at about the same time. A decade and a half on Bing sang "I Kiss Your Hand, Madame" in *The Emperor Waltz* (1948). Young's lyrics to that were written in 1929 with Ralph Irwin providing the music. We all know the lyrics to several Joe Young songs. How about these for starters?

How You Gonna Keep 'em Down on the Farm?
I'm Sitting on Top of the World
Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue
In a Shanty in Old Shanty Town
I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter

YOUNG, VICTOR (1899-1956) Composer, violinist and conductor. Bing knew Victor Young as a songwriting collaborator before the two were linked on the big screen. It was Young's music that did full justice to the Ned Washington-Bing Crosby words of "I Don't Stand a Ghost of a Chance". Young's first Crosby film credit was as orchestrator on *Waikiki Wedding* (1937). This was followed later the same year with a shared credit with Max Terr as vocal arranger on *Double or Nothing*. It wasn't until *Road to Singapore* (1940) that he was shown as musical director, a credit he retained for Rhythm *on the River* (1940), *Road to Zanzibar* (1941) and *Road to Morocco* (1942). It was six years before the Crosby-Young musical contact was re-established on film. That was for *The Emperor Waltz* (1948) when Young provided the background score for the Billy Wilder directed period piece. He also composed the score for *Ichabod and Mr. Toad* (1949) and *Little Boy Lost* (1953). Between times he conducted the music for *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1949) and was musical director on *Riding High* (1950). As far as Bing's films were concerned he bowed out with *The Country Girl* (1954) for which he provided the music score. This multiplicity of credits really boil down to Young composing, arranging and conducting background music on most of his film work with Bing, something he did with the many similar assignments that Paramount and other studios put his way. His best remembered film composing was carried out in the five years before his death. The peak year was 1952 when he provided the scores for *The Quiet Man* and *Shane*. One of his last successes was the music for *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956). That film provided Bing with one of his last chart successes: "Around the World". Of course, the Victor Young-Bing Crosby working relationship produced many fine studio (as opposed to sound stage) recordings.

YOUR OWN LITTLE HOUSE Song. This seldom heard Bing song comes from *Here Comes the Groom* (1951). In the film Bing sings it to a group of children when he accompanies himself on piano. It was written by Ray Evans and Jay Livingston.

YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG Song. The title tells you we are in for a patriotic song, something the public had grown to expect of its composer, George M. Cohan. It was used in the Technicolor short *The Fifth Freedom* (1951) and Bing's attire of loud check jacket and straw hat when he sings the song would have been no more conspicuous had he dressed in the stars and stripes.

YOU'RE A SWEET LITTLE HEADACHE Song. In *Paris Honeymoon* (1939) Bing sings this to himself when he and Franciska Gaal shelter in an old house. Ms Gaal hears it and encourages Bing to keep singing. Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger wrote it.

YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT, MY DEAR Song. Joe Young and Carmen Lombardo collaborated on this. Bing sang it in the 1933 short film *Just an Echo*. Mary Kornman was the beauty in question.

YOU'RE EASY TO DANCE WITH Song. One of the Irving Berlin compositions from *Holiday Inn* (1942). No doubt Berlin had Fred Astaire in mind when he wrote it and it is Fred who sang it in the film's main musical sequence. However, at the film's end, Bing and Fred sing a few lines in a brief medley. It was Astaire to whom Decca assigned it when they made studio recordings of the film's songs.

YOU'RE GETTING TO BE A HABIT WITH ME Song. Bing sang this in the Paramount short *Please* (1933). *Please* was the first of two short films Bing made back-to-back in 1933 for Arvid E. Gilstrom Productions and the "habit" was the delightful Mary Kornman, who was the leading lady in both of the Gilstrom shorts. "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me" was written by Al Dubin (words) and Harry Warren (music). Warren supplied the Hollywood hit parade with many numbers over the next twenty-odd years and it is unfortunate that his film relationship with Bing was not greater.

YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE Song. Featured twice in the 1949 release *Top o' the Morning*, it was the main Johnny Burke-James Van Heusen love ballad written specifically for the movie. We hear it the first time when Bing sings and Ann Blyth sighs and the second time when the pair duet as they walk towards the village church.

YOU'RE THE TOP Song. Twenty years

separated the two Crosby films in which this Cole Porter song was featured. In the 1936 release *Anything Goes* Bing duets with Ethel Merman and the two are joined by Charlie Ruggles for its reprise. When that film was re-made the earlier version was re-titled *Tops is the Limit* for television showings, the new title bearing some slight reference to the Porter song. The 1956 *Anything Goes* rendition of "You're the Top" lacked Merman's gusto. The song was staged in a ship's gymnasium with Bing and Mitzi Gaynor rehearsing it on one side of a partition and Donald O'Connor singing it with Zizi Jeanmaire on the other side.

ZING A LITTLE ZONG Song. An Academy Award nominated number by Leo Robin and Harry Warren from *Just for You* (1952). It was catchy but not destined to become a standard. However it worked well in the film when it was performed on screen by Bing and Jane Wyman at a party held to celebrate the success of Bing's latest show.

Jane Wyman and Bing zing a little zong.

ZUKOR, ADOLPH (1873-1976) Executive. The last entrant in this A to Z catalogue of Bing's Hollywood career is one of the most important in terms of the Crosby film career. Without him Paramount Pictures would not have existed. When Bing signed that first contract with Paramount in the summer of 1932 it was Zukor who was the studio's president. Zukor had arrived in the U.S.A. from Hungary when he was aged fifteen. He was in the entertainment business at the dawn of the twentieth century when he owned penny arcades. Shortly thereafter he became treasurer of a chain of movie theatres. He formed the film production company Famous Players from the small fortune he made by distributing the European film *Queen Elizabeth.* In 1916 he merged with Jesse Lasky's Feature Play Company and the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation absorbed a small firm called Paramount. The new company called itself Paramount and Zukor then built a chain of theatres to screen the studio's product. Paramount-Publix, as it later became, went bankrupt in 1933, and was reorganized as Paramount Pictures, Inc. He was forced out as part of the reorganization, but after Barney Balaban became Paramount president in 1936, he appointed Zukor as chairman of the board. And by then Bing's career in films was fast gathering pace. Zukor remained Chairman emeritus of Paramount Pictures, until his death at age 103.

Keith Parkinson

(Editor: So there we are. A momentous occasion - the end of Keith's marathon A-Z. He started it in BING #93 issued in December 1989 so it has therefore run for 22 years and 67 issues. An amazing series and we thank Keith for all his hard work over the period. The entire A-Z can be found on the BING magazine web site and it will be kept up to date as changes occur.)

Bing Crosby Rides Out the Fifties

John McElwee posted this review on his excellent greenbriarpictureshows.blogspot.com site back in 2007 but the comments about Bing's 1950s movies are still thought provoking.

You can watch Bing Crosby and his kind of musical going out with the tide in Paramount's *Just for You*, a 1952 harkening back, or perhaps farewell to, earlier days when stars like Bing and vehicles like this were enough to pack houses and send everyone home whistling tunes bound for the *Hit Parade*. No way could *Just for You* compete with sophisticated groundbreakers being made at Metro among visionary talent like Arthur Freed, Vincente Minnelli, Gene Kelly, and Fred Astaire. Everybody else's musicals looked and sounded tired beside theirs. Crosby had signed with Paramount for seven years ... but that was seven years ago. Popularity once taken for granted was harder to maintain with audiences far choosier than those who'd flocked to see *Here Come the Waves* and *Welcome Stranger*. Television cut into Crosby's boxoffice, but *everyone* had that problem by 1952. His *Mr. Music* had a negative cost of $1.7 million and ended with domestic rentals of $2.2. $2.1 million was spent on *Here Comes the Groom* and $2.6 domestic came back. *Just for You* would be a return to Technicolor and the biggest budget for a Crosby since the forties ($2.3 million).

It's a great showcase for his talent in maturity, with the added bonus of family conflict drama more engaging now that we know something of what went on in the star's own household. 1952 was near twilight for screen fathers blessed with such respectful and obedient kids. Hard to believe *Just for You* came just three years before *Rebel Without a Cause*. Watching the two together, you'd think they were made fifteen years apart. Natalie Wood, at fourteen, enters in white gloves wearing a *cape*, complaining of having sat through what she calls

a cornball production of "The Student Prince" for the younger set. This is her closest brush with rebellion. Natalie's stated goal is to enter an exclusive finishing school and serve as hostess for Dad's social gatherings. Young pup Robert Arthur, only months past accompanying Kirk Douglas to *Ace in the Hole*'s mine cave-in, addresses Bing as "sir" and barely rocks the boat over a teen-age infatuation with Jane Wyman, Crosby's love interest. Adolescent angst as expressed here is but a mild bump on a fast track to maturity and realization Dad's been right all along. The finish endorses a stint in the peacetime Army Air Force as ideal incentive for a young man to straighten up and fly right. Bing must surely have wished for similarly dutiful and motivated children at home!

Young pup Robert Arthur argues with his screen father.

The Country Girl was Crosby's boldest break with formula, a gamble necessitated by falling receipts mentioned earlier (*Just for You* had ended with $2.4 million domestic). Braver still was his willingness to play a washed-up, clearly Bing Crosby inspired, entertainer. Audition scenes cruelly parallel Frank Elgin's tired shtick with much of what Bing himself had been getting by on during those last several years. The only things that really separate Elgin and Crosby are alcoholism and a cold water flat. Such flirting with self-abasement would become common in the sixties and thereafter, but few big names would venture there as early as 1954. This was a performance deserving of at least the Academy nomination Crosby earned, if not the award he lost to Marlon Brando.

Bing's character in *Just for You* stages Broadway hits of a sort *The Country Girl* dismisses as old-fashioned. Generation gap worries and mild ribbing about his age are front and center in *Just for You*, as if Bing were now easing some of Bob Hope's putdowns into his screen persona. At least one toupee shows graying temples, and efforts at a vigorous dance (comically) throws the old trouper's back out. *Just for You* Crosby plays for laughs much of what he'd perform in deadly earnest for *The Country Girl*. Which then, was the *real* Bing? A little of both perhaps, based on what I've read. Among insights Crosby gives us in *The Country Girl* are a glimpse of what he might be like when stage lights go down and the mask drops. Could *anyone* have been so relaxed and avuncular once cameras stopped turning? Frank Elgin reveals stresses that came with maintaining the Crosby image offscreen. Co-workers have testified to a distant and moody Bing when shooting paused on various Paramount vehicles. Never was he so convincing as when playing childish and fussy in *The Country Girl*. It's a privileged peek at behavior a great many headliners indulged when audiences weren't watching. Crosby's actor enough, and honest enough, to expose not only their foibles, but his own. It's a performance of great self-awareness, and his triumph.

Frank Elgin under stress

You know you're sampling Formula Crosby when the opening shot reveals a marquee —- *Bill Benson* —- *My Kind Of Music* —- *3rd Year*, or *Jordon Blake Presents Carolina Hill in "Forever and Ever."* Crosby character's status as ongoing Broadway sensations in both *Just for You* and *Anything Goes* is a given, which raises the question —- just how *would* his kind of music have been received on the Great White Way in the fifties? Could producers have sold a show constructed entirely around Bing Crosby and his familiar persona? *Anything Goes* (released April 1956) proposes a resounding yes. Amidst a musical landscape about to be

overrun with Elvis and rock n' roll (*Rock Around the Clock* was just out and *Love Me Tender* would be along in November), Bing's Bill Benson is besieged with offers to launch a new show within moments of closing a three-year run on his last.

Were movie audiences still buying into such a conceit? Dire returns for *Anything Goes* suggested they weren't. Paramount invested $3.2 million in the negative. Fantastic rentals from *White Christmas* ($8.1 million) and *The Country Girl* ($6.4M) indicated a comeback for Crosby, so imagine the disappointment felt when Paramount counted a mere $1.7 million in domestic rentals from *Anything Goes*. It would be their last musical foray with a star who'd grossed steadily for them over nearly a quarter of a century.

Jeanmaire and Bing get to know each other.

Contemporary DVD reviews reflect low regard for *Anything Goes*, though *Variety*'s 1956 rave dubbed it *a sock musical package*. Is it sentiment for an aging Crosby (my age when *A.G.* was released) that makes me side with the latter? I won't argue it's *sock*, but there's a certain pathos inherent in such valiant efforts to turn the clock back to days when old standards and musical chairs among mismatched lovers was enough to fill theatre cash drawers. How could Paramount (and Crosby) have known all this was fast coming to an end? Cole Porter lyrics are both cleansed and modernized to comply with Code restrictions and TV gag references. Co-star Donald O'Connor supplies at least passing contact with present day entertainment realities. He's the upstart video sensation (based on Eddie Fisher and *Coke Time*?) who's brought on to prop up (the addressed as) *old-timer* Bing. The success of Euro art movies may have resulted in French star Jeanmaire's casting here, though it's hard selling this fiery (22 year-old) continental's love at first sighting for relaxed to the point of on-screen slumber Crosby. They share romance aboard a (never rocking) ship seemingly bound for nowhere, as indeed it was in terms of profit. Imagine a musical *Between Two Worlds*. I half expected Sydney Greenstreet to adjudge them all boxoffice *persona non grata* and condemn the lot to endless wandering before oceanic process screens

High Society was an enormous hit, though I wonder how much Crosby was credited for it. This was his last musical lead among grown-up co-stars before submitting to the youthquake that resulted in *Say One for Me* and *High Time*, both of which sought to ease Bing toward relevance in rock and roll's new order. *High Society* allowed a reprieve before the necessary transition, for it's jazz highlighted here, and Crosby was always comfortable within those environs. He was (approximately) 53 —- I'll not try being precise as to that age, in deference to raging controversy regarding his actual birthdate going back to, well, *his actual birthdate*. Suffice to say the pairing with Grace Kelly was believable despite a several decades age difference. Crosby was one star a lot of people would miss as members of his generation were swept aside to accommodate younger players. There was, and would continue to be, healthy demand for him on television, but even Crosby must have realized paid admissions without the added marquee lure of Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra would be few. In a year of almost steady loss for Metro, *High Society* managed ten million dollars in worldwide rentals for the star combination. Closest MGM runner-up in 1956 was *Teahouse of the August Moon* ($9.3M worldwide), though in terms of profit, both were slammed by, of all things, *The Fastest Gun Alive*. That economical Glenn Ford western brought home a staggering two million dollar gain, easily surpassing the $1.5M profit for *High Society* and *Teahouse*'s $1.6M in black ink. As for Bing Crosby, *High Society* would be his last starring musical to go into the positive column. Forthcoming vehicles at Fox lost money. *Say One for Me* in 1959 was down by $119,000, while *High Time* the following year took a two million dollar bath, despite teen pandering berths for Fabian and Tuesday Weld in support of Bing. Frequent guest appearances, *Hollywood Palace* hosting, and eagerly awaited Christmas specials would assure a far wider audience via television for the remainder of his life, so it's doubtful Crosby regretted the feature loss in any case. Many of the latter have been (surprisingly) released on DVD. All are worth checking out.

John McElwee

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Priscilla Koenig, by email from San Mateo, California, USA.

Greg, I received the summer BING in the mail yesterday. I glanced thru it, and will read the whole journal soon. I was completely surprised by pages 10 thru 13. You did an excellent job in writing the article.

I wish I could tell you how Club Crosby was originally started. (1936 to 1951) However, I can give you information as to what I know. I joined the club in August 1951. They issued 3 or 4 journals a year. The cost of membership was $1.00 a year. I was a fan of Bing's ever since I can remember (approximately 1941). My Mother always teased me by telling me that she listened to Bing on the radio too much when she was expecting me!

Aug. '51 journal was Vol. VI. Ruth C. Ness (Florida) was the Active President and Virginia Keegan was the Active VP. Bing was President and Larry was VP. The club had branch leaders in Austria, Australia, Canada and England. Ness remained until 1956; however, Mary Maloney became VP in 1953. May 1953 President was Virginia Keegan and Rena Albanesi, VP. January 1956 Joan Interrant was President and Rena remained as VP. Feb. 1057 Rena became President, Mary Maloney, VP.

Shortly, after I joined in '51, I became West Coast Representative, and did Crosby news from the west coast, Rena and Mary lived in N.Y. State. Rena remained president until 1971 when the club was in bad shape (low membership and hardly any funds). Rena hadn't issued a journal in a couple of months. I had met her when Pat and I took a vacation from Milwaukee (where Pat was originally from) to N.Y.C. Anyway, Rena called me and explained the situation, and told me that it was time for her to step down and asked if I would I like to take over. So, I did and she sent me the money that was in the treasury. I started selling candy at work to build up the treasury, also asked family and people I worked with to join and was successful. I was lucky at work, too, as our Xerox dept. offered to help by printing the journals and not charging us for them, plus I had a lot of good friends who came here each journal time and helped me collate the journals.

I enjoy your journal very much. You both do an excellent job, as does anyone else who's involved.

(Editor: The lengths club officials went to years ago in order to keep the club alive never fail to amaze me. We've been very lucky to have such dedicated folks.)

Henry Zecher, by email from Waukesha, WI, USA

I just received my issue of *BING*, and I was happy that you could include some of the article I sent you on Bing's acting, compared to that of William Gillette, the subject of my recently published biography.

Response to my book has been very enthusiastic and complimentary, particularly the writing and the in-depth research. Mind you, Harry Potter is hardly looking over his shoulder, but the book has been very well received. But, in *BING*, under the heading "Some other quotes from the book praise Bing too" you include several long passages about Bing's acting.

However, these quotes are not in my book, since the book is about Gillette. They were from the article I sent you, since I needed to draw more attention to Bing than to Gillette and saw it as an opportunity to define and describe Bing's acting for *BING*.

The first quote about him and the quote from Frank Capra, of course, are in the book. At any rate, you may wish to include a correction in your next issue stating that. But thank you, both for including what you did and for the excellent magazine. I anxiously look forward to every issue.

(Editor: My apologies for any confusion I may have created.)

Bert Bishop, by email from Maylandsea, Essex, UK

Can't recall if this has ever been noted before:

P.G. Wodehouse - Jeeves And Wooster - The Mating Season

Esmond Haddock has recently sung, successfully, at Kings Deverill's Village Concert but now faces the fearsome Dame Daphne Winkworth, his inamorato's mother:

'It was a situation which in the pre-Hallo-hallo epoch would have had Esmond Haddock tying himself in apologetic knots and perspiring at every pore: and no better evidence of the changed conditions prevailing in the soul of King's Deverill's Bing Crosby could have been afforded than by the fact that his brow remained unmoistened and he met her eye with a pleasant smile.'

Trivial; but just to illustrate that Bing turns up anywhere and everywhere and where better than in master humorist P.G.'s novelette!

Robert and Christina Griffin, Mattawan, Michigan, USA

We are long-time subscribers to BING. We also volunteer with the Kalamazoo Civic Theatre (one of the largest in the US) so we are delighted that "White Christmas" is going to be presented this season! From November 25th to December 11th *Irving Berlin's White Christmas: The Musical* will be presented at the Civic

Auditorium in Kalamazoo. This is the stage musical that's been touring the US for the past few Christmas seasons.

David Currington, by email from Turramurra, New South Wales, Australia

Yesterday I finished my cover-to-cover read of the current BING. There were some fascinating articles in there and I thank you as always for your professionalism in producing the hallmark of magazines. Greg's research on the history of the club was a tremendous effort and your background on it very entertaining. Keith is a major force and it is quite sobering to realise that his greatly enjoyed A-Z has reached "W". Gee, Keith has really been fantastic in providing so much detail in this form and in his many articles that have appeared over the years.

I relished both articles by John Newton. His detailed background of the recording of the first Kraft broadcast and description and photo of the disc is for me the icing on that 75th birthday cake which is the *Rare Original Survivors* CD. His dissertation on the B Masters was a total revelation to me. Yes, essential reading. But John has been more than the author of some fine articles. His *Personalities on Parade* series of LPs some twenty years ago was outstanding. They featured well and little known artists in rare and unknown performances. Bing appeared on at least one track of every issue which gave the fans the rarest of rare outings including "Nagasaki" in company with the Mills Brothers and "It's Easy to Remember" - the record to which Bing sang in the film *Mississippi*. The photo of that very disc adorns John's article in this magazine. I wonder if John might consider another dip into his jewellery box for a CD release of something like *Bing: That's Unheard Of*!

Another article in the magazine which I very much enjoyed was a glimpse into your activities, the focal allure being the fact that you now have a unique disc of rare performances by Bing supplied by Michael Feinstein. Very interesting indeed!

Keith Parkinson, Eccleston, St. Helens, UK

...Norman Wolfe's letter in the summer issue neatly crystallises what makes BING magazine special –"the articles which interest me are the ones which tell me things I don't know." Hence the highlights for me are John Newton's explanation of the off air Electro-Vox recordings and his article about Bing's 'B' masters. Fascinating stuff. I also enjoy reading reminiscences by those who knew Bing first hand. Tony Butala provides a good insight into working with Bing and Abe Burrows reveals a little of the private side of Bing.

Perry Huntoon, by email from Chicago, USA

Another great issue of BING! But, as an old New York Yankee baseball fan, I choked when I saw Martin McQuade's reference on page 26 to "Brooklyn Dodger infielder Phil Rizzuto." In fact, Rizzuto spent his entire year with the Yankees and only played in Brooklyn during the several Yankee-Dodger World Series matchups between 1941 and 1955. Pee Wee Reese was his shortstop counterpart with the Dodgers.

Ken Kaminski, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, USA

Having been born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, 83 years ago, after reading Ken Crossland's article about Bing announcing the first inning of the Pirates 1947 baseball season, I just had to write this letter to correct two things he said in his article.

The name of the announcer was Rosey Roswell.

Rosey was a "he" not a "she".

Rosey had a great sense of humor, hence the name Rosey, He was also a real pioneer in the world of sports casting and is enshrined in the Baseball Hall Of Fame. Having heard this broadcast when it actually happened and knowing what Rosey and his co-announcer, Bob Prince, were really like, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Bing was invited out after the game and had a few Minute Maid Orange drinks to celebrate the opening day ball game!

(Editor: Ken Crossland was of course only quoting from an eBay description he had seen but thank you Ken Kaminski for pointing this out. I looked up Rosey and discovered that he was one of the first broadcasters to enthusiastically and unabashedly cheer on the air. He was a long-time Pirates fanatic who was given their broadcasting job in 1936 and remained the club's radio voice until his death in 1955. Always called Rosey, he was physically frail - barely 110 lb - but his creativity and untempered exuberance brightened the broadcasts of even the most dismal Pirates teams. Away from the microphone he authored four books of poetry and aphorisms, but in the booth his energies were focused on his beloved "Buccos." A Pirates extra-base hit was a "doozie marooney," a strikeout was a "dipsy-doodle," and the bases were never "loaded," they were "FOB" (full of Bucs). His most famous trademark, however, was his outrageous home run call, "Raise the window, Aunt Minnie!" followed by his partner dropping a tray filled with nuts and bolts onto the floor, simulating the sound of broken glass.)

Alex Schicke, by email from Germany.

Michael sent me the latest Sepia Vol. 8 CD which arrived today. What a wonderful CD! My favourite tracks are the four tracks from *The Country Girl* and the two with Les Brown. Every time I listen to the Sepia CDs I read your annotations and you sum up the essence of the song quite well. I love also the great cover art and the remastering from the original records is quite marvellous. Just too marvellous for words!

Roger Schore, by email from New York, USA

Most likely this has been brought to your attention, but

Seth MacFarlane's new CD "Music Is Better Than Words" contains three Crosby-associated tunes: "It's Anybody's Spring," "Love Won't Let You Get Away," and "It's Easy to Remember." I haven't purchased the CD yet and maybe Bing is cited in the liner notes, but it does appear that the man behind "Family Guy" is a Crosby partisan.

Jason Liddiard, by email from Paris, France.
Just to say, we had a truly smashing time at the Leeds event. It was a real joy to spend the afternoon in the company of warm friends and enthusiasts. I particularly enjoyed the presentation on Bing and the Dorsey Bros. "Stay on the Right Side of the Road" – wow! One of my favourites! All the film/TV clips were great, and I could have watched and listened all night...Thanks to you and Michael for going to such effort for everybody to enjoy!

Ken Shaw, Hessle, N. Humberside, UK
I thought the Leeds meeting was great. I do enjoy these get-togethers, meeting friends both old and new. It's always a pleasure speaking to Ron, Michael and Brenda and all the others who I hope will continue to attend. It was very pleasant to be with Perry Huntoon from the Brookfield Jazz Society of Chicago. Perry appeared to be studying for a degree in "Yorkshire Real Ale" so I did my best to further his studies! This did not in any way detract from his excellent presentation of "Bing and the Dorseys".

The presentation of Vol. 3 "Bing at the Movies" was to me "magic" and the highlight of the day. I can only marvel at the time and care taken to produce it. Unfortunately Colin Stewart beat me in the "Flog It". Well done, Colin.

I should like to close by offering a sincere vote of thanks to both of you, Malcolm and Michael and your families, for another wonderful day. May they long continue.

Martin McQuade, by email from New York, USA
Of special note: A complimentary copy of *Bing* #158, containing this reporter's essay, "Bing and Dutch: A Reagan Centennial Overview" was sent to the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, California. Shelley R. Nayak, the library's archivist, just sent a courteous thank you note. "I very much enjoyed seeing your article about President Reagan and Bing Crosby. We have added the issue to our collection of periodicals."

Geoff Vizard by email from Wigan, UK
...I hope the meeting and dinner went well, and I am very sorry to have missed it once again. On the occasions I have been to the meetings I have enjoyed it very much indeed. I have recently signed in to You Tube, after being told by my daughter that she had seen a Bing video on there (it was the one about the Ketchum Christmas Star). I went on there, and was very pleasantly surprised with the number of Bing songs and videos, that were on, and, they are being added to daily, I really love it! I would also like to thank you and all the other contributors of this wonderful magazine, both here and elsewhere in the world, for all the marvellous articles, pictures, news items, CD reviews, and for all the time you all give to creating this great Crosby magazine. Bing would be very proud of you all!

Leeds 2011

International Club Crosby – 46th Annual Dinner/Meeting - Sunday 2nd October 2011

Bob Halls was, as usual, scheduled to give us his report on the meeting but ill health caused him to pull out at the last moment. Jeremy Rose kindly "volunteered" to step into breach.

Firstly, in case anyone's worried, I'm only keeping this seat warm for Bob Halls! For the past few years we've all become accustomed to the heading "Bob Halls sends his comprehensive report" in the winter issue of BING, followed by an extremely detailed and lively account of the proceedings.

This year, when I arrived at Weetwood Hall for the 46th Annual Meeting of the ICC, one of the first people I bumped into was Michael Crampton who told me that Bob had had to cancel at the last minute due to a very heavy cold which prevented him from driving. Michael said he was worried about finding a volunteer to take notes for the magazine coverage, at which point – for reasons I still haven't quite worked out – I heard myself volunteering for the task!

Anyway, although I can't hope to come up to the very high standards set by Bob, I hope that the following will give you some flavour of the good time that was had by all at Leeds 2011.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Malcolm's customary pre-meeting PowerPoint presentation contained tracks released on CD since last year's meeting, accompanied by the usual wonderful selection of photos. After "Where the Blue of the Night..." Michael opened proceedings by welcoming this year's first-time visitors amongst whom were – Jason Liddiard and his wife who had travelled from their home just outside Paris, and Les Waters, who once appeared on the TV Talent show "Stars In Their Eyes" singing a number by – well, I'll leave it to you to guess ...

Michael also welcomed back – after an absence of some years – Roy Chappell and his wife Sylvia. More of Roy later...

Well-deserved thanks were then offered to the team who all so do much to keep Bing's legacy alive. Michael, Malcolm, Wig, David Currington, Greg Van Beek and all the many enthusiastic and knowledgeable folk around

the world who take so much time and trouble to share that enthusiasm and knowledge with us all.

1968 MESSAGE FROM BING

Bing's 1968 recorded message to club members mentioned the newly-opened Madison Square Garden in New York City, giving an interesting potted history of the stadium and its uses. Bing then went on talk about a forthcoming visit to the UK during which he intended to take in a little golf and horse-racing before telling us of his recent visit to his *alma mater* at Gonzaga where he had donated a micro-film system loaded with the contents of the NYC library, in order to make the contents of that library more accessible to the students at Gonzaga. He signed off with his usual modest mixture of thanks and gratitude to the people who continued to support his efforts. As I listened to this message, recorded more than 40 years ago, I found myself glancing around the room and wondering whether how many present in 2011 had been present at its first playing...

MALCOLM'S PRESENTATION

We started with an interview with Gary Giddins who confirmed (thank goodness) that although he is *slightly* behind schedule, Vol. 2 of his biography of Bing is still set to be published towards the end of 2012. He said that he had been presented with a large amount of extra research material which had taken some sorting through, but had been well worth the effort, providing, for one thing, a much clearer picture of Bing's work for the troops during WWII. He did say that some of the details of Bing's relationships with his first family might make for uncomfortable reading, but he ended by saying that the whole experience of writing Bing's biography had left him with an enormous admiration for Bing the man.

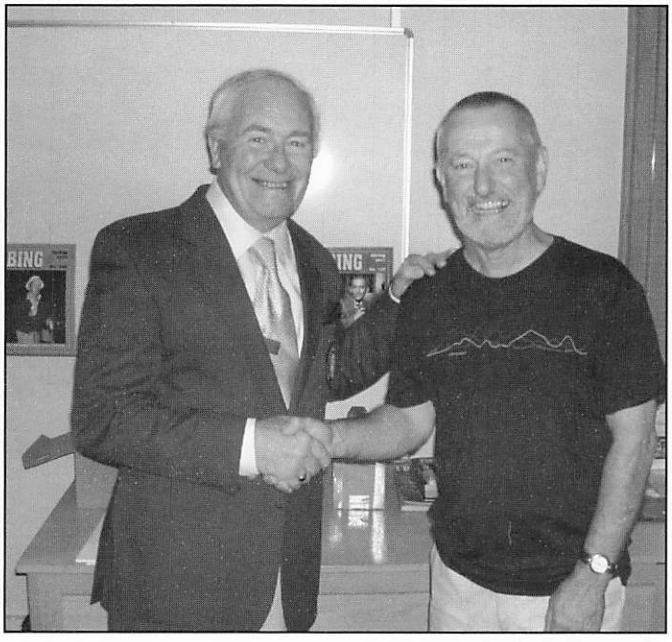
Bringing back memories of visits to Saturday Morning Pictures when I was a kid, we then saw – in its entirety – a Warner Brothers *Merrie Melodies* cartoon called *Swooner Crooner*. This was the heart-warming tale of an egg-farmer (Porky Pig) whose layers refuse to lay whenever a certain bean-pole skinny crooner chicken sporting a large green bow-tie takes to the microphone. In desperation, the farmer auditions for a singer who will get his chickens laying again, eventually finding a slightly portlier, laid-back chicken crooner sporting a pork-pie hat, smoking a pipe and crooning, "When My Dreamboat Comes Home". I think you get the picture... Needless to say, there was a happy ending.

Then we had a clip from another cartoon called *Hollywood Canine Canteen* followed by the final scene from the Phil Silvers Show (Sergeant Bilko) in which Bing puts in an appearance and finally, the 2010 Argos Christmas ad in which footage of Bing making an entrance in the '77 Christmas Special is very cleverly inter-cut with actors performing what I think is known as "break-dancing" in order to advertise a well-known UK discount store.

We then moved on to an interview with Rich Little , who told a very funny story about when he first asked the producer of his TV show if he could invite Bing to be a guest. Apparently the producer's response was, "Bing Crosby? What's he done?" to which Rich's reaction was, "What's he DONE? D'ya want me to back up a truck?!" (Well I thought it was funny...) Anyway, the producer obviously found out what Bing had "done" and we were played a clip of Bing and Rich on the show singing a medley of some of Bing's most famous duets with Rich imitating Bing's various singing partners.

ROY CHAPPELL

As I said at the beginning of this report, Roy was making his return to Leeds after an absence of thirty years. He had a successful career as a professional singer, and we were shown a clip of him appearing in an early edition of the UK TV talent show "Opportunity Knocks" singing a medley of "I Only Have Eyes for You" and "What A Difference a Day Makes" followed by a 1979 television spot on a UK show called "Time To Spare". On this occasion he sang a medley of Crosby hits, kicking off with "Zing a Little Zong". This was taken at such a lick that it sounded like a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song! It wasn't until afterwards that Roy told me that seconds before the recording the producer had told him that they had to make up a bit of time, and he'd told the pianist to put his foot on the gas!



Michael Crampton welcomes Roy Chappell (left).

Roy himself then took the floor and recounted the story of the occasion when he had met Bing during a taping of the "Parkinson" show and later at Bing's Belle Vue concert in 1976. Even more fascinating was how he ended up singing at the unveiling of the statue of Bing at Gonzaga in 1981 following an invitation from the late Ken Twiss of the Bing Crosby Historical Society.

Roy's self-effacing account of these two memorable events was one of the highlights of Leeds 2011 for me. Another highlight was...

THE PRESENTATION BY PERRY HUNTOON

Following on from last year's "Bing and Jazz" presentation, Perry stepped forward to give us "Bing and the Dorsey Brothers", a fascinating account of Bing's involvement with the legendary swing siblings – all presented without the aid of notes! The presentation was illustrated with seven of their recordings – from "Stay on the Right Side of the Road" from their first session together on March 14th 1933 through to "The Girl Friend" with Tommy's orchestra from January 7th 1951. Perry gave us a comprehensive back-ground to each of the recordings, and spoke with such obvious passion and knowledge that, for my money, he could have gone on for twice as long!

The full list of songs in Perry's presentation was as follows:-

"Stay on the Right Side of the Road" 14/03/33
"From the Top of Your Head" 14/08/34
Medley from "Pennies from Heaven" 17/08/36
"In a Little Hula Heaven" 28/02/37
"Pennies from Heaven" – "All-Time Hit Parade" V-disc. 18/06/44 (This version was a new one on me, with an augmented string section.)
"Sweet Lorraine" 06/09/45
"The Girl Friend" 07/01/51

Perry Huntoon in action.

RON FIELD

It was a great personal pleasure to meet Ron at Leeds this year. Up until our meeting Ron had been one of those names who cropped up regularly on various discussion boards – and in BING, of course – displaying an obviously vast knowledge of all things Bing. Australian by birth but now settled in the States, Ron would occasionally answer a query about a particularly rare recording or piece of Crosbyana by saying something along the lines of, "I know I've got that, but I think it must be back in Australia!"

Anyway, Ron had asked to be allowed to address the meeting, and it turned out that he had taken the time and trouble to contact various celebrities – mainly from the world of golf – asking them if they had any particular memories of Bing they would like to share with members of the ICC.

Among the replies Ron received, two stand out – one from Bruce Devlin and one from a golfer even I have heard of – a certain Mr Jack Nicklaus!

Bruce Devlin replied to Ron as follows:-

> During my early years on the PGA Tour I had the pleasure of playing in the Crosby Clambake and the opportunity of meeting Bing. He was indeed a wonderful man!!
>
> During those early years, all PGA Professional names were placed vertically on the commitment sheet and the tournament names were at 45 degrees horizontally across the top of the sheet. To commit for a tournament you had to find your name and check the box under the tournament with your initials.
>
> One year I had committed to play in The Crosby (or I thought I did) and had traveled from Miami to Pebble Beach, checked into the Lodge, watched the Super Bowl on Sunday evening and was ready Monday morning to sign in for the tournament to play with my partner, who was the great Dean Martin. At sign in, I was told I had not committed for the tournament and the Tournament Director informed me that I could not play. When one looked close at the commitment sheet you could see that my initials had been rubbed out, but I could not play.
>
> Then I had to call Dean and inform him that I was not allowed to play, telling him that you could see that I had initialed the sheet but that the Tournament Director would not allow me to play. He immediately called Bing and asked him to intercede on our behalf pleading that I had traveled across the country and would not have made the trip unless I was sure I had committed. Bing's attempt also failed with the Tournament Director even though Dean had told Bing that he would not play the Crosby ever again, and he never did.
>
> I felt bad that this all happened, especially with Dean Martin never playing the Crosby again.

It seems that Jack Nicklaus went to considerable trouble to answer a series of questions about Bing on camera. The problem is that – for technical reasons which I failed to grasp – the filmed answers are, at the time of writing, only available as YouTube links, and these answers are *not* preceded by the relevant questions! I have looked at a couple of the links and they are well worth seeing, so if anyone would like details, please e-mail me at jeremyrose45@hotmail.com and I would be only too pleased to forward details of the questions together with their YouTube links.

Obviously a believer in going straight to the top, Ron also contacted the office of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, and although the Duke didn't reply in person, Ron did receive a reply from an equerry offering, on behalf of HRH, all best wishes for the October meeting.

Thanks, Ron, for going to the trouble of collecting together those personal memories of our man.

LES PAUL

Malcolm then played a brief clip of a recent documentary programme featuring the late Les Paul. Of course, Bing's most famous collaboration with Les was the 1945 million-seller "It's Been a Long, Long Time". Within the clip, Gary Giddins was interviewed, saying that he thought that "It's Been a Long, Long Time" was one of the most perfectly produced records of all time – a once-in-a-lifetime match of song, singer, arrangement and accompaniment. Couldn't have put it better myself!

After some complimentary remarks about Bing from Les, we saw him in concert towards the end of his long life, still in remarkably good form. He told the story of how he was performing to a very, very small audience in Needles, California and he phoned Bing inviting him to join him saying "We're killing 'em in Needles!"

GREG VAN BEEK'S PRESENTATION

Always an absolute highlight at Leeds, Greg's compilation this year certainly did not disappoint, with a mouth-watering selection from, amongst others, the 1960s "Hollywood Palace" shows. I'm sure I speak for everybody present when I say that it is a great shame that these wonderful performances aren't more widely available.

We started with a clip from the 1965 Bob Hope Christmas show, with Bing singing "Do You Hear What I Hear?" This may sound a bit silly, but the thing that struck me about this was that Bing just stands there and sings – he doesn't move a muscle other than those required to produce that wonderful sound.

Throughout all these clips, Bing shows himself to be an absolutely consummate performer – completely at ease with whatever style he is required to perform in.

After "When the Red, Red Robin" from a '66 "Hollywood Palace", we saw Bing and Tammy Grimes performing the novelty song, "Typically English".

Malcolm then momentarily stopped the tape to draw our particular attention to the next song – and if the next three minutes had been the only clip played that day, I would have considered the cost of my trip to Leeds money well-spent. The song was called "The Men in My Little Girl's Life" and was, I suspect, a new one to most people in the room. It was an admittedly sentimental song about the stages in a daughter's development from childhood to young adulthood seen through her father's eyes. It was a mixture of spoken word and song, and Bing performed it immaculately. Perched nonchalantly on a stool, he again barely moved a muscle, but did the whole thing with complete sincerity. If I was the only one with a tear in my eye at the end I would be *very surprised!*

We were then treated to Bing and Nanette Fabray doing a series of "Duets Through The Ages", Bing and his old friends The Mills Brothers re-creating "Paper Doll" and then the weird and wonderful line-up of Bing, Dorothy Collins, Charles Aznavour and Skitch Henderson at the piano performing a medley of "Hits of 1966".

It was a surprise to me to see Skitch Henderson "in the flesh". I don't know why, but from his radio appearances with Bing on KMH in 40s, I had always imagined him to be of small stature – a sort of Larry Adler at the keyboard. Skitch was, in fact, a very impressive-looking chap, towering over the assembled company.

The whole sequence ended with Bing, Jeannie C. Riley and Bobby Goldsboro joining in a Nashville Cats medley and Bing and Glen Campbell singing "1432 Franklin Pike Circle Hero".

Another fabulous compilation from Greg, for which we all owe him a huge vote of thanks.

ODDS AND ENDS – in no particular order...

Malcolm played a 10-minute-or-so clip from Bing's 1971 TV movie *Dr Cook's Garden*. Probably not the greatest dialogue ever written, but played by Bing with great skill and complete sincerity (there's that word again...). It certainly made me wish for a DVD release and a chance to see the whole thing.

Next, a sequence of interviews conducted by Malcolm in the States – primarily in connection with his forthcoming book on Rosemary Clooney – but with a few "Bing" questions tagged on at the end!

Firstly, an interview with Rosemary herself from 1999 when Rosemary spoke very warmly of Bing saying that he was "the best friend I ever had." Next, Rosie's daughter Monsita, who seemed to be a truly delightful lady and told a very good story about deputising for her mother as Bing's "date" when she was a young girl. The one thing she remembered very clearly was "those blue eyes..!"

Next, Rosie's brother (and George's uncle), Nick Clooney, who remembered as a young man being at a party when Bing was present. Bing was sitting in an armchair and was prevailed upon to sing "White Christmas". Nick was apparently sitting on the floor leaning up against the back of Bing's armchair, and he remembers "feeling" the vibration of Bing's voice through the chair. "Not many people have *felt* Bing Crosby sing," he said!

We then heard from that great supporter of the Crosby cause, Michael Feinstein. Michael speculated as to how Bing's career might have progressed if his great friend Eddie Lang had lived and Jack Kapp hadn't – as

he put it – "destroyed his jazz chops." He also said that the "holy grail" for him as a Crosby collector was the set of essentially "demo" sides that Bing cut in 1931 with a certain George Gershwin at the piano. Now that *would* be a find...

Finally, Rosie's second husband, Dante diPaolo, sharing his memories of working alongside Bing as a child-actor in the 1939 film, *The Starmaker*.

We then heard a rehearsal tape – provided by Michael Feinstein – of Bing rehearsing the very first thoughts for what eventually became the Palladium medley. Quite a few songs that didn't make it into the final medley, but fascinating to hear Bing busking through a few numbers with just a piano accompaniment.

The customary sale/auction of memorabilia took place with Malcolm presiding. Michael Reynolds had kindly donated several bundles of journals from Crosby organisations around the world, together with an almost-complete set of his father Fred's wonderful publication, "The Crosby Collection". The star of the auction, however, was a wonderful oil painting of Bing which Fred had commissioned from a professional artist. The lucky winner of this "lot" was Oisin Andrew. Mr. Reynolds very generously donated 50% of the proceeds to club funds.

Michael Crampton distributed copies of Sepia Vol. 8 to those who had pre-ordered and additional copies were available for purchase. It was also explained that Vols. 9 and 10 would mark the end of the series. This will fulfil the aim of getting to the end of the Decca years, and will mean that, together with the 51 volumes of John McNicholas's "The Chronological Bing Crosby", a complete survey of Bing's commercial recording career from 1926 – 1956 will be available on CD. An amazing and unprecedented achievement.

And so to...

MALCOLM'S DVD COMPILATION

A couple of hours in Crosby heaven thanks to Malcolm's sterling efforts in putting together yet another show-stopping compilation of clips from Bing's movies from the 30s to the 60s.

Far too many to list individually, but a few personal highlights were "Learn To Croon" from *College Humor* in its newly-remastered almost pristine state, "Easter Parade" from the "colorised" version of *Holiday Inn*, "C-U-B-A" – one of my favourite numbers from *Blue Skies* (real Technicolor this time!), three songs from *Top O' The Morning*, which I've never seen in its entirety, "Chicago Style" another great favourite of mine from *Road To Bali* and the title number from *Say One For Me* – a duet between Bing and Debbie Reynolds, with Miss Reynolds performing a very appealing little dance routine.

The customary auction for the DVD of the compilation (for ICC funds) took place and the lucky winner was Colin Stewart. (I would have joined in the bidding, but by this stage of the evening a severe case of writer's cramp had set in. I don't know how Bob Halls manages every year!)

CONCLUSION

The inevitable question was asked about whether to continue next year, and I'm delighted to report that the answer was a resounding "YES!!"

Let's hope that by then, Michael will be holding up a copy of Volume 2 of the Gary Giddins biography, Bing Crosby Enterprises will have released even more treasures from the archives and the Crosby/Gershwin sides have turned up!

I'd settle for any one of the above, but in any event, I very much look forward to seeing friends old and new next year, and Bob, if you have the slightest sniffle around the beginning of October 2012, give me a call and I'll come and pick you up and chauffeur you to Leeds myself!!

Very best wishes to all Bing fans around the world.

Jeremy Rose

(Editor: A superb write-up by Jeremy of what was a most enjoyable day. A copy of "Dr. Cook's Garden" can now be obtained from Lovingtheclassics.com)

"JUST LIKE THE ONE'S I USED TO KNOW"

Christmas is on the horizon. It's a time that we think of friends we haven't seen for a while as we write their cards and often we remember those we have lost. One friend your editor recalls with a smile

is the late Lionel Pairpoint who was a regular contributor to the magazine for many years. I thought it might be nice for you to read an article he wrote for the magazine in December 1995 which has some appropriately seasonal content.

Commerce has never really been my 'bag'. The elaborate process of transferring a pound from someone else's pocket into my own, leaves me as cold as a frog in an ice-bound pool. Yet, things weren't always this way. As a child, my brain seethed with monetary invention. In today's world, it is likely that I would have 'borrowed' a pair of pliers and for a small fee, removed those 1992 Comic Relief Red Noses that persist in adorning radiator grilles but when I was only as high as the wheel of the milkman's cart, there were fewer windscreens to wipe and cars to wash. Business could be very seasonal for budding moguls. Spring heralded the gathering of horse manure. This was a non-starter. I loathed rhubarb and feeling worthy of higher things than the purveyance of ordure, I chose beating the same out of neighbours' carpets with an ancient tennis racquet. The profit margins involved, hardly warranted a probe into directors' salaries and arm-numbing labour aside, this usually entailed, arriving home, in a grey patina of dust, to the inevitable parental recriminations.

Of course, in those days, summers were hotter. Therefore, people should have been thirstier and anyone with a modicum of business acumen, two ounces of lemonade powder and unrestricted access to the kitchen tap would, surely, have become a soft drinks tycoon, in next to no time. Not so! I could tell by the wrinkling of sundry noses at the murky contents of the (freshly washed) jam jars that I was on to another loss-leader which left only 'The Grotto'. Now, 'Grottoes' (or 'Grotters', in the vernacular} may have been unique to my neck of the woods and again required minimum capital – a paper bagful of dirt, a few stolen blossoms and one was in business. The soil was dribbled in intricate patterns on the pavement into which the flowerheads were planted, in order to create, a rather effective, still life. On occasions, this refined form of begging could be quite rewarding. Old ladies would stop and stare, in wonderment (or in vague recognition of their own property) and might drop a halfpenny in the tin provided. There was, however, a hidden health hazard to this occupation – the local bully was liable to appear and with one sweep of his boot, kick twelve, solid minutes of painstaking industry into one's face.

The crew of the 'Rainbow Warrior' would not have been too keen, had they seen us, launching our autumn attack on the trees in the local spinney, with rusty saw and blunt chopper. Firewood and logs were much in demand and local tradesmen were pestered for apple or soap boxes for conversion to kindling and although a few coppers might be earned, by this means, we were often advised that our wares were "too damp", "too thin", "too thick" or "too little", necessitating their confiscation, without payment, to prevent us "robbing someone else". My favourite time was winter. Guy Fawkes' Day could be a colossal money spinner - sheer lack of space prevents me regaling you with the near- tragic story of young Cyril Biggs -the "human guy", whose brilliant, if impassive performance netted the Company, an astonishing 1/7d. Now, a fiscal tip! Please advise your young relations that, for maximum return, carol singing must be confined, only, to Christmas Eve. Our "pigeons", for this enterprise, were chosen with scrupulous care and Sunday School Teachers were a prime target. At this juncture, I should mention that I attended an old- fashioned Church School ("Headmaster: Dr. H Yaxley – Boys Trained") where the class teachers were in the habit of doing a "gig" at the Chapel on Sundays.

Enter Miss Gelly, a Scots spinster, who, in the modern idiom, might be described as "a whole lotta woman." In fact, her ample proportions, inspired some of the coarser boys to invent a rhyming couplet, including her surname, to which, may I add, I never subscribed. For, in spite of the incipient moustache and thick lisle stockings, I was totally besotted with a lady, whose generosity, belied that reputation, (unfairly) accorded to her kinsfolk. She was a "brick" and being boys, we naturally, took full advantage of her kindly nature. Miss Gelly (the "G" was soft as in "touch"!), lived with her elderly mother (She had to be the wrong side of 50!), in a large house with a drive. Further signs of affluence were a telephone and a bathroom and as soon as the street lamps began to twinkle, on Christmas Eve, four "wise boys" would "travel afar", to her doorstep.

Michael Crampton (left) presents Lionel with a specially bound copy of his radio book in October, 2000.

We were ushered into the drawing-room, with many an "Och", and a "Losh" and "Ye mist be froozen", to perform our entire repertoire while "Mam" fussed in the kitchen, preparing mince pies and cups of cocoa.

Miss Gelly's quiet contralto often accompanied us

for some of the carols and during our brisk version of "Silent Night", she might be heard to murmur, "Adagio, boys, adagio". Youthful ignorance persuaded us that this was a Gaelic form of "Bravo!", causing us to increase the volume another notch and accelerate a little more. But the end result was always the same. An incredible, extraordinary, HALF-CROWN!, was pressed into each of our sticky palms – at that time, the sum total of such munificence, might have represented a full day's pay for a grown man.

No need now for an extended concert tour. Having amassed five week's pocket money in one fell swoop, any further door-knocking and bell-ringing would have been superfluous. So, a whooping quartet raced to their respective homes. After all, there were still paper chains to make and hang, the Christmas edition of "Monday Night at Seven", on the wireless and then to bed, still fondling that precious silver coin, dreamily planning next year's festive recital and hoping that when Santa delivered, he wouldn't overlook the Meccano set, together with the "Wizard" and "Hotspur" Annuals that he had hidden, on top of the wardrobe, in mid-October.

I must confess that I wasn't too conversant with Bing Crosby's activities, during this period. I was aware that he was a famous film star, who sang a bit but it is doubtful that I would have emulated his philanthropy, by donating the "royalties" from my rendition of "Silent Night" to charity. It is uncertain when this song, together with "Adeste Fideles", began to be regularly featured in his Christmas radio show but there is no doubt that the tradition was consolidated during his tenure at the "Kraft Music Hall" and it seems that the first, existing, audio confirmation of this occurs with a recording of the whole programme of 24 December 1942. But before discussing this, let me go back, in the series, to Christmas Day 1941. So far as I am aware, no copies of this show, survive and there is also some contention regarding the titles broadcast on this occasion. *(Editor: see note at the end of the article.)*

Reason demands that both "Adeste" and "Silent" should have been there although there is strong support, (due to the United States' recent entry into the War), for "The Star Spangled Banner" taking precedence as the "opener". Others put forward include, "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" and two Irving Berlin songs, "Oh! How I Hate To Get up in the Morning" and the extraordinary "White Christmas"! Disbelief, immediately clouds the mind – "Hold on. Berlin only arrived in early November and the cameras hadn't started rolling yet." Yes, they had. *Holiday Inn* was already several weeks into production by Christmas and the songwriter travelled again to the West coast on 21 March, 1942 to view the final cut. "Wait a minute, the song wasn't published or copyright applied for until 16th May 1942 (In 1909, an amendment to the copyright laws required the date of first publication to be entered on the application for copyright). Not unparalleled. "Star Dust" was recorded a full year before its publication. "Yeah, well why weren't the newspapers full of it the next day?" Very simple. Nobody recognised it. It was a nothing song. Even the composer lacked faith in the refrain that was to become the biggest "sleeper" of all time. When the songs from the film were aired in June/July 1942, the song-pluggers put their money on, "Be Careful, It's My Heart" and to a lesser extent, the "flag-waver", "Song of Freedom".

WHITE CHRISTMAS
Words and Music by IRVING BERLIN
FROM THE PARAMOUNT PICTURE
IRVING BERLIN'S
"HOLIDAY INN"
FEATURING
BING CROSBY AND FRED ASTAIRE WITH
MARJORIE REYNOLDS, VIRGINIA DALE, WALTER ABEL and LOUISE BEAVERS
A MARK SANDRICH PRODUCTION
BE CAREFUL, IT'S MY HEART 1/- net
WHITE CHRISTMAS 1/- net
SONG OF FREEDOM 1/- net
THE VICTORIA MUSIC PUBLISHING COMPANY LTD.
52 HADDOX STREET, LONDON, W.1
IRVING BERLIN INC., NEW YORK

In spite of his possibly, apocryphal, remark, "You don't have to worry about this one, Irving", Bing did not sing "White Christmas" on his radio programme again, until the next October, at which time, it had already achieved "hit" status and although performed on other occasions, he never used it on another KMH Christmas show, during the Kraft series.

I am confident that it did appear in that broadcast on 25 December 1941. The best measure of proof being a surviving copy of, "Let's Start the New Year Right", written for the same film, from the very next programme. The tragedy is that the historic, first hearing, of the song is apparently, lost for ever and we are unlikely to discover how Bing and the Music Maids (?) handled it or if Mr Trotter's arrangement was the same as that used on the commercial versions.

The 1942 programme, referred to previously, had a uniqueness of its own. For some time there had been dark mutterings regarding the Kraft Music Hall. The essence of the argument was, that there was too much "gab" and not enough use of Crosby – he sang too infrequently. This was "watered down" when the new

season began in October 1942 to, "each programme will have 8-10 musical items". Had Bing had something to say about a possible extra workload? The whole affair became academic, anyway. The Christmas Eve presentation in 1942 was the penultimate programme in the 60 minute format. Starting in the New Year the shows were reduced to 30 minutes. This was a direct result of the war. More cheese than ever was being produced but the Government had blocked off large allocations for the armed forces and lend-lease, requiring sales promotion to yield to an elementary, goodwill exercise.

It would be less than critical to say that this particular programme was "disappointing". It is alleged that due to one of those interminable squabbles with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), the free choice of songs was limited and Janet Blair who had recently replaced Mary Martin, as regular 'chanteuse', ensured that listeners got a least, two turkeys, on Christmas Eve with the inexplicable, "Steam Is on the Beam" (the only song ever written about central heating?) and a decidedly, unmelodious 'khaki' cantata, "The Soldier of Mine".

The Charioteers delivered some true harmony on "Red River Valley" and "Sweet Little Jesus Boy" and John Scott provided a sober arrangement of "The Toy Trumpet" for the Orchestra. Significantly, the number of Bing's vocals hadn't increased at all. Apart from the opening and closing hymns, he participated in only four songs. There is a salute to the Season with 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'; The Music Maids and Hal joined him for 'Why Don't You Fall in Love with Me?' followed by 'Good Morning Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip' and there was a pleasant duet with Miss Blair of another of those songs that he seemed to enjoy singing but never recorded – Cole Porter's 'You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To'.

The guest list was a trifle skimpy. Oscar winning, Fay Bainter, well-known for her portrayals of furrow-browed but sympathetic matrons, read the doleful 'Letter to Virginia' and there was a conspicuously unfunny Christmas sketch which wasted the talents of most of the 'resident' cast, plus Jack Carson. 'Santa Claus' was played by Andrew Tombes, one of those 'B' feature, character actors whose face you have seen a hundred times but you can't put a name to. He appeared in only one Bing film, as the clean-shaven half of the two 'Royal undertakers' in *Road to Morocco*. It may be that my remarks will be considered as over-caustic but I must be honest. Although I am still grateful for the preservation of this elderly radio programme in its entirety, much of the script would nowadays have the audience rolling up their sleeves rather than in the aisles.

There was a further opportunity to hear Bing on that same Christmas Eve of fifty-three years ago, when the War Department gave domestic listeners their first taste of a series that had been going out to the Armed Forces on short-wave for 43 consecutive weeks. (It was already required listening in Britain, having been aired on the BBC's Forces Programme since the previous April).

The purpose of this occasion, according to a spokesman for the Office of War Information was to forge a link between servicemen abroad and the folks on the Home Front and the subject of this auspicious premiere was Command Performance USA – "the greatest entertainers in America as requested by you, the fighting men and women of America, presented this week, and every week until it's over, Over There", a pledge that was kept until long after the war had ended. Command Performance No. 44 was no exception in living up to the commitment. There was an impressive line-up. The Andrews Sisters, Ginny Simms, Ethel Waters and Dinah Shore, all had a song to sing. Spike Jones acknowledged the holiday in inimitable style, with 'Jingle Bells' and the Kay Kyser Orchestra performed their big hit, 'Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition'. Comedy came from Red Skelton, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy with straight man, Charles Laughton plus Jack Benny and Fred Allen, who proved that they hadn't been hired for their vocal prowess, by duetting on 'Friendship'. Here is a quote from a contemporary review of the show.

'Bob Hope tossed off a monologue and cross-fired with Crosby. The special treat, in the vocal department, was a version of 'Basin Street Blues' that came out of the tonsil partnership of Bing Crosby and the Charioteers with the Al Goodman Orchestra'

And few would quibble with this!

Bing did not get involved with the 'wall to wall' style of Yuletide programme that was to become his speciality, until he joined Philco, as is evidenced by his ninth and last Christmas appearance for Kraft. Again, a copy of the complete broadcast of 21st December 1944 has been preserved. As might be expected, the mandatory 'opener' and 'closer' are used and he delivers the identical arrangement of his hit recording, with the Andrews Sisters, of 'Jingle Bells' but this time accompanied by the Charioteers. Remember, this was to be the last Christmas of the war and the resident vocal group also offered their own version of 'Careless Talk Costs Lives' with 'A Slip of the Lip (Can Sink a Ship)'. The Kraft Choral Club was on hand with a couple of appropriately, sacred songs but the remaining items were, quite definitely, unseasonable. Eugenie Baird, obliged with a solo of 'I Dream of You (More Than You Dream I Do) and Bing had two more songs. There was a nice version of 'I'm Making Believe', Mack Gordon and Jimmy Monaco's Academy Award nominee from *Sweet and Lowdown*, a Fox film whose only other claim to merit was the appearance of Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. The other song was written in 1934 and enjoyed yet more revivals, in 1960 and 1985. Bing latched onto one of these when he recorded it with Billy May. Although this particular version of 'What a

Diff'rence a Day Made' boasted an extra half-chorus, I would venture to suggest that this was not the best of the three renditions that were aired on Kraft or, perhaps, it is just the dubious fidelity of a geriatric taped copy. Be that as it may, the discriminating listener would still have the prospect, three days later, on Christmas Eve, of hearing Bing warble 'White Christmas' accompanied by his old 'governor', Paul Whiteman, on the 'Philco Radio Hall of Fame'.

All that remains is to wish, everyone, a Merry Christmas and to slightly expand the philosophy contained in my first paragraph, I will append, that all that one may ask of this life is, enough food to eat, sufficient clothes to wear, a shelter from the elements and eight and a half million pounds.

Lionel Pairpoint

(Editor: After Lionel wrote the article, he and I carried out further research and we discovered that the songs used in the December 25, 1941 Kraft broadcast were:
Adeste Fideles (Bing, with The Music Maids)
I Can't Give You Anything But Love (Connie Boswell)
Chattanooga Choo-Choo (Bing, with The Music Maids)
Oh! How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning (Bing, with The Music Maids
Rose O'Day (Bing, wth Connie Boswell)
White Christmas (with The Music Maids)
When Christmas Is Gone (Connie Boswell)
Shepherd Serenade (Bing)
Silent Night (Bing)

Also, a low quality recording of that December 1941 version of "White Christmas" has since surfaced and is very similar to the recorded versions. Bing does however interject "to hear sleigh bells in the snow" during the Music Maids' chorus. It has been established that "Silent Night" was first sung by Bing on the Woodbury Show of December 25, 1934.

Lionel's wonderful book about Bing's radio appearances can now be found on the BING magazine web site.)

Further Dissertation On The State Of Bliss

Myerscough, the man next door,
Too aloof to speak,
Never seemed to understand
My mild eccentric streak.
But yesterday expensive goods,
Delivered in a van,
And boxed up with impressive taste,
As only Comet can....

Came to his door with much ado,
Much fussing on the drive;
With Myerscough surprisingly
All vital and alive.
He looked about, spoke loudly,
In his efforts to be seen;
Hoping that the neighbours
In their envy would turn green.

Then came his call - a rare event!
'You're musical!' he stated.
'Come round, drink tea,and steep your soul
In the music I've created!'
I tiptoed there in trepidation,
Wondering what I'd hear,
When suddenly an orchestra
Struck up as I drew near.

A concert blasting from the place;
He'd hired the Philharmonic.
Tea, did he say? To stomach this,
I'd need a gin and tonic!
Inside his house this deafening noise
Came out of fourteen speakers.
A console, flashing coloured lights,
Had faders, knobs and tweakers.

He quickly spotted I had placed
My hands across my ears.
I'd bitten down upon my lip,
And my eyes had filled with tears.
So stopped the music. Oh what joy!
He said: 'OK, you choose!
Mahler? Bach? Shania Twain?
'Mantovani Sings The Blues'?

I paused a while to clear my head
Of the dull residual ring;
Then said in a voice quite hoarse with stress:
'Please let me hear some Bing!'
'Some Bing?' he echoed scornfully.
'That crooner from the past?
I only play the music here
From artists who will last!'

But, as it's you, I'll tell you what:
Go get a Bing selection.
We'll play it through the system;
Coax it closer to perfection.'
I went back home, but soon returned,
Resisted bringing crates;
I chose instead to try him with
A dozen seventy-eights.

'I can't play these!' howled Myerscough.
'A time machine is needed!'
'Of course you can!' I pointed out.
'Your turntable's four-speeded.'
Reluctantly he tried the deck

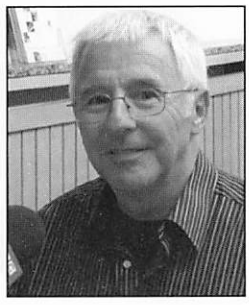
With 'I'm An Old Cowhand';
But Bing was lost beneath the static;
As were half the band!

He snatched it off, that dreadful din.
His stylus would be crumbled!
He shouted: 'This is lost on you!'
But I can't say I felt humbled:
I gathered up my seventy-eights,
No longer welcome there;
Went home, took down my gramophone,
A polished wood affair.

I wound its handle lovingly;
Blew Myerscough a kiss;
Then settled back in my old chair
To an hour of Bing - and bliss!

John Walton

BING ON THE BOX



Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights

USA & Canada

A Connecticut Yankee	TCM
Angels in the Outfield	TCM
Let's Make Love	FMC
Road to Morocco	TCM
Road to Utopia	TCM
Say One for Me	FMC
Stagecoach	THIS

USA Radio

The big news is that remastered Crosby radio shows have been heard at weekly intervals on Sirius XM Radio's 40s channel since July 4. In their publicity Sirius said:

> Through the 1940s and beyond, Bing Crosby hosted 30-minute radio programs for Kraft™, Philco™, and others. These programs have become collector's classics, and have not been heard on the radio in their pristine original quality .. until now! SiriusXM has combed through Bing's archives, and acquired newly remastered original copies and will debut the weekly airing of *The Bing Crosby Show* starting on July 4th.

The shows air on Saturdays at 6 pm (ET) with rebroadcasts on Sundays at 11 am (ET) and Mondays at 12 am (ET). Sirius edits them slightly by taking out the original commercials and inserting their own announcement. "Pristine original quality" is a bit of an overstatement, particularly in respect of the Kraft shows, but it's great to have them broadcast. The shows heard so far are:

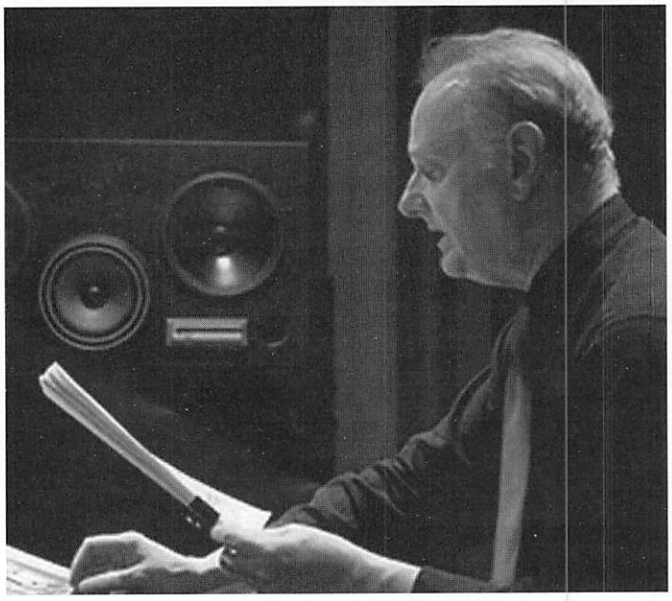
Kraft Music Hall 15th June 1944
With The Music Maids & Men, The Charioteers, Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Marilyn Maxwell. Guest: Bob Hope.
Kraft Music Hall 6th July 1944
With Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Marilyn Maxwell. Guests: Tommy Dorsey and Jimmy Dorsey.
Kraft Music Hall 13th July 1944
With Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Marilyn Maxwell. Guest: Keenan Wynn.
Kraft Music Hall 20th July 1944
With Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Marilyn Maxwell. Guest: Sonny Tufts.
Kraft Music Hall 9th November 1944
With Eugenie Baird and Ethel Smith.
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield 8th November 1950
Guest: Dick Powell
Kraft Music Hall 2nd September 1943
With Leo "Ukie" Sherin, Trudy Erwin, The Charioteers.
Guest: Frank McHugh
Kraft Music Hall 9th September 1943
Guest: Phil Silvers
Kraft Music Hall 23rd September 1943
Guest: George Murphy
Kraft Music Hall 30th September 1943
Guest: Phil Silvers
Bing Crosby Show for General Electric 27th September 1953: Guest: Gary Crosby
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield 21st September 1949:
Guest: Peggy Lee
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield 3rd October 1951:
Guests: Jane Wyman and Hoagy Carmichael
Kraft Music Hall 7th October 1943
Guest: Lucille Ball
Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield 17th October 1951:
Guests: Bob Hope and Martha Tilton

Arne Fogel's long-running Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is still heard on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, MN. and it can be heard internationally, via the KBEM-JAZZ 88 website. Go to http://arnefogel.com/index.php/home/ for a link. To give you an idea of what is included in a typical show, this is what was heard on September 24th.

> Lazy - Symphony - Tenderfoot - S'posin' - Cabaret - Whispering – My Little Buckaroo - Young and Foolish - My Pet - Looking at You - Blue Hawaii - Little Dutch Mill - Get Me to the Church on Time - Chapel in the Valley - My Honey's Lovin' Arms

Greg Van Beek reports that on August 21st, the CBS *Sunday Morning* TV show played Bing's version of "Mona Lisa" as background music for a three minute segment about the theft of the painting from the Louvre museum one hundred years ago, August 21st, 1911. What a nice surprise that was! Out of all the recordings of this great song that they could've chosen, including the most obvious, definitive version by Nat King Cole,

they picked Bing's 1956 recording instead. Greg continues to present his monthly nostalgia specials on WJUB 1420 AM "The Breeze" in Plymouth, WI, and these can now be heard over the Internet.



Arne Fogel at work.

Rich Conaty's long-running "The Big Broadcast" show from New York puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Films shown include:

High Society	TCM & C4
Road to Rio	BBC2
Robin and the 7 Hoods	BBC2
Son of Paleface	Sky Classics
The Country Girl	TCM
White Christmas	Sky Classics

It was very pleasing to see *The Legendary Bing Crosby* show up again on the Sky Arts2 channel in September. This was the documentary shown in the States on PBS last year and subsequently issued on DVD (see BING#154 page 6 and BING #156, page 56 for further details).

UK radio

The National Presenters

Russell Davies on his BBC Radio2 show on Sunday evenings continues to include Bing frequently in his most interesting show which celebrates the art, craft and inspiration of the popular song. His selections varied from "There Ain't No Sweet Man" through to "An Apple for the Teacher" (the alternate version) to "Now You Has Jazz". Russell played a couple of songs by other artists with almost identical orchestral introductions and he wondered if there were any other examples. I quickly fired off an email drawing his attention to Bing's songs "Let Me Whisper I Love You" and "Poinciana" as I am often fooled by the introductions.

The final hour on Radio 2 on Sunday nights is taken by **David Jacobs** and he had only rarely played Bing until his show on October 9 when Mr. Crosby had three entries in David's common denominator slot. The theme was "Bing and the ladies" and we heard "You Came a Long Way from St. Louis" (with Peggy Lee), "La Vie En Rose" (with Marlene Dietrich) and ""Fancy Meeting You Here" (with Rosie).

Barbara Windsor has been deputizing for **Elaine Paige** (Radio 2, Sundays 1 p.m.) and she puts in an occasional song from the Groaner such as "Don't Fence Me in" (July 17), "Well, Did You Evah" (July 24) and "Style" (Sept. 11)

On other nationally networked programmes, **Desmond Carrington's** Friday night show usually has a particular theme each time and Desmond tries to fit in a Crosby song where he can but sadly the period under review has been very disappointing. The only entries were on July 1 when the theme was 'Sports' and this gave Desmond the excuse to play "Straight Down the Middle and "Fugue for Tin Horns."

In the long established **Desert Island Discs** programme on BBC Radio4, celebrities are interviewed about their lives and pick out eight records to take with them to a desert island. On July 1, actress Harriet Walter was the guest and she selected 'Well, Did You Evah' as her second choice, after Beethoven's Third Symphony. She correctly said 'Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra' - but incredibly the BBC website credited Frank alone!

The local presenters

The BBC has 40 local radio stations which have a combined weekly audience of 7.22 million listeners a week, according to official Rajar figures for the second quarter of this year, up from 6.84 million a year ago but down from 8.29 million a decade ago. However local radio is set to be hit hard by the imminent round of cost cutting at the corporation, with hundreds of hours of local programming likely to be axed. Large swathes of output outside of peaktime programming are expected to be syndicated between neighbouring stations in a bid to cut budgets. Let's hope that our favourite presenters are left untouched. The BBC Trust is inviting comment on its proposals and has set up a website for the purpose. Go to http://consultations.external.bbc.co.uk/bbc/dqf/ or Google "Delivering Quality First" and you'll find it. If you'd like to make a case for the continuation, or even extension, of our favourite broadcasters shows, then that's the place to do it.

Many of the stations must have programmes that play "our kind of music" but I can only report on the few of which we are aware.

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet) is one that regularly features Bing on her Sunday afternoon show and in the four month period under review she played 38 songs by our man. They varied from "That's My Weakness Now" in 1928 to "At My Time of Life" in 1975.

Anne interviewed me in August to talk about the Rosemary Clooney book being put together with Ken Crossland and it gave me the opportunity to thank her for playing Bing so often. Please help Anne to keep up her good work by sending her requests by email to

anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk

Anne's official BBC photograph.

Bill Rennells hosts *Harmony Nights* which is heard on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for three hours starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings. You can always hear a very eclectic selection of Bing's work on the show and in the four month review no less than 27 songs from Mr. Crosby were played varying from "Sweet and Lovely" to "Legend of Old California" and "Prisoner of Love". Trevor Wagstaff and Stan White make regular requests and Trevor got our Leeds meeting mentioned when he asked for the song that always ends the proceedings – "A Perfect Day".

"The Late Paul Barnes", the big band and jazz oriented show hosted by the award-winning **Paul Barnes** continues to be heard for two hours over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. There's also a "Listen again" feature. Paul always builds a Crosby segment around the Bing calendar on the first Sunday of the month. He played the June calendar song – "May I?" – and he followed up with "I Positively Refuse to Sing" (from the soundtrack of *We're Not Dressing*). Paul couldn't explain some of the background noises on the soundtrack and ICC member Colin Stewart came to his rescue and explained about the Droopy the bear responding to Bing's singing. In September, Paul thought it was "a rather good photo" of our man with Perry Botkin and it gave him an excuse to play Bing singing with several guitarists. The October photo of Bing and Louis singing "Now You Has Jazz" led into an excellent jazz themed segment with six Crosby songs including "Hangin' Loose" with Count Basie. Paul said that he receives the occasional complaint about featuring Bing but he didn't apologise for this saying "Crosby is superb, just listen to the sheer pleasure of these items."

BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader** featured Bing 13 times on his Sunday afternoon show during the four month period we are reviewing. Stan White keeps Howard supplied with CDs. On one programme, Howard ventured the opinion that Frank Sinatra was the best singer / crooner and he soon got a rebuff from Stan leading Howard to agree that Frank was one of them, Bing being the other.

I am sure that West Country based **David Lowe** still plays Bing in his 2-hour "Swingers and Singers" show on Sunday nights at 8 p.m. but I do not receive details any more. Similarly **Mike Carey** at Radio Derby likes to use Der Bingle regularly on his Sunday afternoon *Memorable Melodies* programme but again I do not have any information available.

Australia

On June 21, Peter Allan (President of the Australian Bing Crosby Society) was interviewed at length by Michael Pavlich on ABC Radio 774. John promoted his club and played a few Crosby selections. The result was 19 queries by phone and 15 new paid-up members. This is a wonderful outcome considering that the programme was broadcast between 2 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. Must be a lot of Crosby fans who can't sleep!

The Melbourne based *Golden Days Radio* community radio station broadcast "Bing – The Final Chapter" (the LP of Bing's final radio broadcast introduced by Alan Dell) in two parts on October 15 and 22nd. This was to mark the anniversary of Bing's passing and it could also be heard over the Internet at www.goldendaysradio.com

Ken Boness, on behalf of the Australian Bing Crosby Society, continues to broadcast from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Eastern FM 98.1 each Friday. The programme is called "The Melody Lingers On with Bing Crosby & Friends" and is heard in many parts of Australia by satellite. It is repeated on Monday mornings at 12:30 a.m. If you would like a request played, call Ken directly (03) 9722-9981 during the show or email Ken anytime at: **themelodylingerson1@gmail.com**

Members will recall that Ken used to broadcast the show with Lance Gardam but I have to give the very sad news that Lance passed away in August.

Malcolm Macfarlane

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Dolores Hope, who gave up her singing career to spend 69 years at the side of her husband, Bob Hope, died on September 19 in the home she and her husband bought in 1940 in the Toluca Lake section of Los Angeles. She was 102. The Hope and Crosby families were close for many years and they even shared a house in England while the men filmed *The Road to Hong Kong* in 1961. Kathryn always said that Dolores was her favourite gin rummy partner. Dolores was godmother to Mary.

After Bob Hope's death at age 100 in July 2003, Mrs. Hope continued the philanthropic work they had done together, largely through the Bob and Dolores Hope Charitable Foundation.

But before she was widowed, she had reclaimed a bit of the spotlight for herself. In 1993, when Bob Hope, who was six years her senior, had semi-retired, she recorded her first album, "Now and Then," a collection of prewar hits and more recent songs. Over the next

decade she made several more albums, including "Somewhere in Time: The Songs and Spirit of WWII" and, with her husband, "Hopes for the Holidays."

In 1997, a few days short of her 88th birthday, she was a special guest performer at her friend Rosemary Clooney's engagement at the New York nightclub Rainbow and Stars, singing three numbers, including "It's Only a Paper Moon," which she had sung the night she met Hope.

Dolores DeFina was born on May 27, 1909, in Harlem, the daughter of John Thomas DeFina and the former Theresa Kelly. She grew up in the Bronx and changed her last name to Reade when she began a career as a nightclub singer.

She was appearing at the Vogue Club in Manhattan under that name in 1933 when the actor George Murphy took Bob Hope to see her. At the time, Murphy and Hope were starring in the Jerome Kern-Otto Harbach musical comedy Roberta at the New Amsterdam Theater. She and Bob were married the following year.

She continued her singing career during the early years of their marriage, often appearing in Bob's vaudeville shows, but she largely retired to bring up their four adopted children. Her husband sometimes mentioned her in his monologues, and besides turning up for many of his television specials, Mrs. Hope occasionally appeared as herself in series, including "The Jack Benny Show" in 1958 and the public affairs programme "The Christophers," also in the 1950s.

She sometimes accompanied her husband on his tours entertaining American armed forces overseas. On a Christmas tour during the Vietnam War, she sang "Silent Night" to the troops, bringing many to tears.

Dolores joins her husband on one of his USO tours.

Mrs. Hope, a Roman Catholic, received many humanitarian awards for her charitable work, much of it on behalf of Catholic charities benefitting the poor. She was also the founding president of the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif. In 2008, the Ladies Professional Golf Association honored her, an avid golfer, for contributions to women's golf.

The Hopes' son Anthony died in 2004 at age 63. Mrs. Hope is survived by two daughters, Linda Hope, a television producer, of Toluca Lake, and Nora Hope; another son, William, of Oakland, Calif.; three grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

Patrick Anthony Crosby, one of Bing's grandsons, died on September 19 at the age of 50. He was the second son of Dennis Crosby and Pat Sheehan. The obituary in the *Los Angeles Times* of October 13 stated:-

"Patrick was a beautiful, compassionate, and loving soul. He had been courageously fighting illnesses the past few years. A grandson of legendary entertainer Bing Crosby, Patrick's father Dennis died in 1991 and his mother Patricia in 2006. Patrick passed away peacefully at Cedars Sinai in Los Angeles, CA surrounded by friends and loved ones. He is survived by close friends, his brother, sister-in-law and nephew Luke Crosby. Memorial services will be held at Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd, 501 North Bedford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210 on Sat. Oct. 15th at noon."

Edith Fellows died of natural causes on June 26, aged 88, at the Motion Picture and Television Fund's retirement home in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley. She is known to Crosby fans as the precocious orphan Patsy (aka "Sarg") in *Pennies from Heaven* (1936) but there is quite a Dickensian type story to her real life and we'll take some space to tell it.

The only child of Willis and Harriet Fellows, Edith Marilyn Fellows was born in Boston on May 20, 1923; her mother abandoned the family a few months afterward. At 2, Edith, moved to North Carolina with her father and paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Fellows. As a toddler there, she took dancing lessons to correct her gait (she was dreadfully pigeon-toed). At 4, Edith, who also sang, was spotted by a talent scout. For $50, he said, he could arrange a Hollywood screen test. She and her grandmother boarded the train. In Hollywood, they found an empty lot at the address the scout had given them. Edith's grandmother was too proud to return home and admit she had been swindled. She took a series of housecleaning jobs, leaving Edith with a local family. The family's son was an extra in pictures, and one day Edith accompanied him to the studio. She was soon cast in "Movie Night" (1929), starring the comedian Charley Chase. More films followed and by 1935, when her performance opposite Claudette Colbert and Mr. Douglas in "She Married Her Boss" landed her a seven-year contract with Columbia Pictures, Edith Fellows, at 12, was a star.

She had a series of leading roles in several Columbia pictures as well as her own series, *The Five Little Peppers*, in which she played the eldest sibling, Polly. Between 1929 and 1942, when she was dropped by the studio, she appeared in some 50 films. As she never grew taller than 4ft 10in, these were mainly juvenile roles. Stardom had come at a cost, for Edith's grandmother ran her career with an iron hand. She was not to play with her schoolmates, as she might fall and mar her pearly skin. She was not to shout, as it could strain her voice.

Over time, her grandmother cut her off from anyone who might be a malign influence, which by her reckoning appeared to be nearly everyone. Even Edith's father, who had joined them in California, was eventually deemed superfluous and sent packing. One day in the mid-1930s, there was a knock at the door. On the doorstep was Edith's mother, come for her daughter — or, more precisely, for her daughter's earnings. A bitter custody battle ensued, and accounts of it saturated newspapers nationwide in the summer of 1936. Edith's mother claimed that the girl had been abducted by her grandmother, a charge that the authorities of the period took seriously in the wake of the Lindbergh kidnapping four years before. She also asserted that Edith's father had once tried to sell her to a dancing school for $5,000. Ultimately, the judge awarded custody of Edith to her grandmother and ordered her earnings placed in trust. In 1939, the Los Angeles Times reported that her estate might end up worth $150,000 - the equivalent of about $2.3 million today - when she turned 21 and could claim the money. Instead, her tale took another cinematic turn when she returned from acting in New York theater to collect her childhood income. When the California bankers handed her a check for $900.60, Fellows thought it was a joke and later recalled asking, "OK, now where's the rest of it?" Her grandmother wasn't around to ask; she had been dead for several years. Fellows always blamed the missing thousands on her mother, suggesting that she must have found a way to drain the fund.

Edith dances with her hero in *Pennies from Heaven.*

Ms. Fellows continued making movies through the early 1940s, but by then she was no longer a child. Demand for tiny grown-up film actresses (her adult height was 4 feet 10 inches) was negligible. She turned to stage work, appearing on Broadway and one night in 1958, performing in a New York charity show, Ms. Fellows became paralyzed with fear. A psychiatrist diagnosed stage fright and prescribed Librium. Ms. Fellows was dependent on the drug, along with Valium and alcohol, for years afterward. She earned her living as an operator for telephone answering services. Then, in the late 1970s, a friend wrote "Dreams Deferred," a play based on her life, for a Los Angeles community theater. He asked Ms. Fellows to play the central character, a woman much like herself. Her performance, in 1979, led to a string of guest appearances on television shows in the 1980s and early '90s, including "Simon & Simon," "St. Elsewhere" and "Cagney & Lacey." Her renewed career, Ms. Fellows later said, let her quit pills and alcohol cold turkey.

While performing with the USO in the 1940s, she had met talent agent and future studio executive Freddie Fields. They married in 1946, had a daughter and divorced in the mid-1950s. The breakdown of the marriage in the mid-1950s tipped her into a psychological crisis. Her second marriage to management consultant Hal Lee also ended in divorce. Besides her daughter, Kathy Fields Lander, from her marriage to Mr. Fields, survivors include a grandchild. In later life Edith Fellows lived in a courtyard apartment in Hollywood with only three cats for company: "I was teethed on phoneys," she remarked, "and I don't miss them."

In 2005, the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York screened Pennies from Heaven and our own Martin McQuade introduced it saying:

"Edith Fellows absolutely adored working with Bing. She recently shared some reminiscences with me about this highlight of her movie career."

> "One of the memories about Bing is whenever I had a soda or a candy bar, he'd always come over and say, 'What have you got there?' I'd say, 'a soda, Bing.' He could see what I had. We played this game all the time. He managed to ask me if he could have a bite or a sip of soda. I'd always say, 'Yes' and he would take my candy bar or soda and just walk away. I lost more candy bars and sodas!! You see, I had a crush on him (who didn't?) and so I let him get away with it. Looking back he must have thought what a dufuss I was. Hey, Bing. You owe me over 200 sodas and 150 candy bars!!! Do you think he heard me? Such a crush I had.
>
> I knew Bing was married and so I didn't want to break up his marriage, not with four sons!! So, I suffered in silence. That's hard to do when you're thirteen!!! He never knew, do you think? A sweet memory. By the way, after the film, he gave me a beautiful dog that I named Sarg after my character in Pennies.
>
> Regards, Edith."

Mary Fickett passed away on September 8 at the age of 83. She will be remembered for playing Nurse Ruth Martin on the daytime ABC-TV soap opera *All My Children* from 1970 until 2000. In 1973, she won the first Emmy presented to an actor for daytime drama when her character gave an impassioned speech against the Vietnam War, considered a bold move on

conservative daytime TV. She received Emmy nominations as well for an episode in which her son was missing in action and for another in which she was a rape victim. In the emotional and sexual roller coaster of soap operas, Agnes Nixon, creator of *All My Children*, juggled the conventions of the form with her mission to explore deeper issues from new perspectives. To do this in the context of a fictional small town, Pine Valley, required central characters who would, like the matriarch Ruth, embody stable values.

"There has to be some core around which other people disintegrate and come together again," Ms. Fickett said in an interview with *The Los Angeles Times* in 1995. "If the place were in chaos all the time, you wouldn't have some place to bounce off of. They've had problems — Ruth was raped, and she had an affair — but viewers want to believe there is a core."

A native of Bronxville, N.Y., she had been a seasoned stage, film and TV actress before *All My Children*. Her Crosby coneection comes from her first feature film role which was as Bing's ex-wife in *Man on Fire* (1957). In 1958, she was nominated for a Tony Award for her Broadway role as Eleanor Roosevelt in *Sunrise at Campobello*.

Mary Fickett confronts Bing in *Man on Fire*.

Roland Petit, the acclaimed choreographer died on July 10 at the age of 87. Born in 1924, Petit took his first dance steps at 9 at the Paris Opera's School of Dance. While opening several ballet companies in Paris after its liberation from occupying Nazis and the Marseille ballet house, Petit maintained ties with Paris Opera, offering 11 creations, including "Notre Dame de Paris." He married the ballet dancer Zizi Jeanmaire in 1954. Petit's reputation grew well beyond France in the 1950s during a four-year stint in Hollywood, choreographing classics like *Daddy Long Legs* with Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron (1954) and *Anything Goes* with Bing and his wife Jeanmaire (1955). Petit choreographed for Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn among other great dancers during an eclectic career that saw him spend six months at the head of the Paris Opera in 1970 then moving to the Casino de Paris for music hall creations until 1976. He then settled in Marseille and lent his name to the company in 1981, now known as National Ballet of Marseille-Roland Petit. He is survived by his widow, Zizi Jeanmaire and their daughter, Valentine.

Uan Rasey, a first-call trumpet player for MGM and other studio orchestras, perhaps best known for his evocative solo in Roman Polanski's 1974 film *Chinatown,* died on September 26 at the age of 90. Uan (pronounced You-on) Rasey was born in Glasgow, Montana, in 1921 and taught himself to play the trumpet as a child. He moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1937. Rasey contracted polio as a child and spent his career playing trumpet while using crutches. Besides soloing in composer Jerry Goldsmith's Oscar-nominated score for *Chinatown*, Rasey played trumpet for many other film soundtracks, including *An American in Paris, Ben-Hur, Cleopatra, Gigi, How the West Was Won, My Fair Lady, Singin' in the Rain, Spartacus* and *West Side Story.* He also played on scores for television and radio and in live orchestras throughout Los Angeles. Uan was a regular member of John Scott Trotter's orchestra and often worked with Vic Schoen. He can be heard on many of Bing's records in the late 1940s and on Bing's Kraft and Philco broadcasts.

While researching *El Senor Bing*, **Martin McQuade** had the privilege of chatting in March, 2010 with Uan, trumpeter on that LP as well as a member of John Scott Trotter's Orchestra from 1943 – 1948. Martin adds: "Rasey was until just recently teaching master classes. His memory was astounding regarding the personnel on that long ago album. Uan also recalled the fun he had playing Bing's theme song at the beginning of each broadcast of *The Philco Show* and fondly remembered one instance when Bing praised his backing on air of a rendition of "But Beautiful" (the March 10, 1948 broadcast). Uan remarked that Bing was a private man but that they would speak often about their mutual interest – fishing. With the passing of Uan Rasey, the living link to Bing sadly gets a bit more tenuous."

Anabel Shaw. We are a bit late reporting this death as Anabel died on 16th April, 2010, aged 89. Combing through all the Crosby reference books you will fail to find a link between Bing and this actress. She did have a fairly significant role in the 1944 film *Here Come the WAVES* however, when she was eighth billed as Isobel under her real name of Marjorie Henshaw. She had registered with the Screen Actors Guild in 1943 and was placed with Warner Bros. studio by the William Morris Agency, which represented her at the outset of her career. It would seem that she made her film debut on loan to Paramount for that Crosby picture before leaving Warners and signing with 20th Century-Fox under her adopted stage name. The films which followed

have not stood the test of time. Titles such as *Secret Beyond the Door* and *In This Corner* are unlikely to register with all but the most avid filmgoer. Her acting career followed her into the 1950s with a mix of film and television work until her first marriage and motherhood put claims on her time. There were sporadic returns to acting until she remarried in 1988.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord's regular look at some of the many celebrities he has interviewed over the years who had a connection with Bing. This time he remembers the epic partnership with Bob Hope.

Crosby and Hope, Hope and Crosby, their names were synonymous. They were two of the most popular and enduring stars of all time. Together they were the screen's most successful comedy team. Like their song "Put It There Pal" suggested, they were a perfect blend, "like meat and potatoes or salt and tomatoes— boy what a blend." Their comedy exchanges and self-deprecating humour seemed timeless. Their popularity in movies and on radio and TV was unprecedented.

There has not been a time in my life that I was not aware of Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. I have been one of their countless fans since my formative years when I listened faithfully to their weekly radio shows.

Over the years I was fortunate to interview and socialize with them on a number of occasions. In fact, one time while visiting Bob's home with Rich Little, he surprised me by telling Rich that he not only knew me, but that we had "worked together." He obviously meant that I had interviewed him several times. However, I reveled in the thought that we had actually "worked together."

Bob was always impressed with my total recall of his and Bing's careers. Once when I mentioned the background behind a funny but obscure scene in one of their movies, he said in amazement, "how do you know that?" I got a big laugh from him when I replied that I knew their lives better than my own.

Bing was 74 when he left us in 1977. Bob passed away one month after his 100th birthday in 2003. Now they belong to the ages in film and broadcast retrospectives of 20th century pop culture.

The stars of the hilarious *'Road'* comedies were born in the same month in 1903, Bing in Tacoma, Washington, May 3, and Bob in Eltham, England, May 29. Their families moved while they were still youngsters, the Crosbys to neighbouring Spokane and the Hopes to Cleveland, Ohio. Both families had seven children.

I was indeed privileged to be a friend to both of my boyhood idols and to produce radio anthologies about their lives and legendary careers. I was greatly honoured in 1981 to be the emcee for the unveiling of the bronze statue honouring Bing at his alma mater Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. In 2003 I returned to Gonzaga as the emcee of a centennial tribute to Bing.

Throughout the dark days of the 1940s Hope and Crosby were not only the two biggest stars in the entertainment world, but also the top comedy team in show business with their zany 'Road' movies, radio shows and tireless touring for the war effort. "We had a lot of respect for one another," Bob remembered fondly, "as you know Bing had a great sense of humour and we had a lot of fun and travelled extensively together. I guess we played at least a hundred exhibition games of golf for charities around the world."

During one of my conversations with Bing, he recalled their initial encounter. "I first met Bob at the Capitol Theatre in New York where we were on the same bill. He was doing an act with a girl who played straight for him and he was a wise-cracking comedian. I was just starting out as one of the Rhythm Boys and we used to go together to the Friar's club where all the actors hung out. I saw a lot of Bob in those days and we have been great friends ever since."

Four years later they were reunited at the Capitol Theatre. "We were back in New York in 1932," Bob told me. "I was the emcee and Bing was the headliner – he was a radio and recording star by that time. We were there for two weeks doing four shows a day. By the second week we started ad-libbing and we worked up an impromptu act. Five years later I was signed by Paramount and moved to California. A short time after my arrival I went down to Del Mar Race Track, where Bing was one of the owners, and at his invitation, attended one of their Saturday night parties. We got up and did the same act we did at the Capitol Theatre. A couple of guys from Paramount who were there thought we really worked well together. They thought we were ad-libbing. That was 1939 and that's how the *'Roads'* started. We made seven of them."

On their way to *Singapore*, *Zanzibar*, *Morocco*, *Utopia*, *Rio*, *Bali* and *Hong Kong*, there was as much comedy on the sets as there was on the screen. "We did a lot of ad-libbing," Bob admitted. "The great writers of the pictures, Hartman and Butler, who did a wonderful job preparing the scripts, used to walk on the set and we would say, 'If you hear one of your lines yell Bingo!' Bing and I would add our own material and once in a while lose some of their lines, but the wonderful construction they did for those pictures always came through."

Bing and Bob in "Utopia"

During my radio interview with Dorothy Lamour in 1974, she recalled fondly her two favourite leading men, Bing and Bob. "I used to call myself the highest paid straight woman in the business. I'll never forget the first Road picture. I studied my script and I knew every word. When I got to the first day's shooting and was standing between the two guys all of a sudden they were not saying one word that was in the script. They were ad-libbing back and forth and finally I said, while the cameras were rolling, 'Come on fellas please let me get my line in – will you please?' Well, after that I would read the Road pictures scripts and I'd get an idea what it was about, but I never learned my lines because there was no sense to it. I mean there was one day when we were supposed to be on a safari; there were seven takes of the safari taking off and there were seven pages of dialogue, completely different each time, with ad-libs from both of them. I loved all (the Roads). As a matter of fact I should have paid them to do the pictures, I had so much fun."

Bing was never happier than when he was working with Bob. He remembered those happy times as we reminisced at his home in Hillsboro, California: "The most satisfying movies to me were the 'Road' pictures. I believe they provided people with a lot of fun. They were a pleasure to make with Bob and Dorothy Lamour."

It was in 1985 while taping my last interview with Bob that in a wistful moment he reflected warmly on the legacy of his old pal and comedy partner. "The marvelous thing about Bing is that we still have his wonderful recordings and films and they are permanent. They will be here when we are gone and that's a comforting thought."

Hollywood's "Rover Boys" travelled their last road in 1962 to Hong Kong. However, their images are as alive today as in the past with frequent showings on TV of their comedy classics. Bing is still the charming fast-talking con man and Bob, as always, is his shill and gullible accomplice. They remain forever young, forever our "Sunshine Boys."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor's Note: Gord's radio tributes to Bing and Bob won prestigious international awards from Columbia University and the US National Catholic Association of Broadcasters. Both legendary stars were profiled in Gord's original show business anthology, "Showbill." A sequel, "The Golden Years of Entertainment", will soon be published.)

50 Years Ago

Bing arrived in England on July 19, 1961 to film *The Road to Hong Kong* at Shepperton Studios. Apart from this, he made some guest appearances on TV; he played a lot of golf, visited Ireland for the first time and had a trip to Europe. Many members visited Shepperton to meet Bing and **Fred Reynolds** was one of several who wrote in *Crosby Post* (the club's magazine at the time) about the experience.

My Wonderful Day at Shepperton

My visit to Shepperton had been arranged about a week in advance but when I reached there, Les Gaylor had already arrived. I'd no idea that he was going, and he told me he had arranged it only the day previous.

I had several sessions with Bing in between takes for the film, and he told me several interesting things about the film. He gave me some autographs. We met and chatted to Bob Hope, Miss Joan Collins and Howard Keel, and Robert Wagner who also came on to the set. We had photographs taken with Bing, Bob and Joan. I gathered from some of the technicians that Bing was in great form when he recorded his songs for the film.

One or two amusing incidents worth noting: Bing went on to the set with the wrong trousers so he just peeled them off and stood there in his underpants waiting for the right ones with Bob and everyone chuckling…but Bing was quite unperturbed. Then when Bing was signing Les's items the workmen started to move his portable dressing room and disconnected the lights…there was Bing in the dark with his pen and trying to sign, and Les on his hands and knees trying to find his discs.

A group of us moved outside for a breath of fresh air, and when Les came up to us, Bing said to Bob, "This is one of my fans from an island about 70 miles away." Bob cracked "My fan club should be on an island," to which Bing replied "Yeah, Alcatraz." I think Bing's little reference to the island prison fortress was a real good crack and Bob had to laugh.

It was a grand experience to see these two great stars walking around singing and whistling just as if no one was there. Les had to go about 6 o'clock to get his train, but after they'd taken the last shots for the day Bing stood there singing "…my pretty bubble has burst, somebody else saw you first…" (from "I Guess It Had to be That Way") and he was whistling away there…really a great treat for me.

One or two other points of interest…I was told that of all the films they'd done at Shepperton none has created more interest than this and never has there been such a number of requests from people to visit,

The scene with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin.

Bing said they would have liked some of the

sequences to have been in colour, but the part with Sinatra and Martin had already been done in black and white. He also said that he was going over to Ireland to George O'Reilly, and in fact I'd had a letter from George earlier in the week telling me the same thing.

By the way, Bing hopes to record an LP of Christmas songs before he returns to the States.

Fred Reynolds

(writing in *Crosby Post,* October, 1961)

Just before he left to return to the USA in November, Bing completed the recording of a TV show for ABC-TV with Dave King, Marion Ryan, Terry Thomas, Shirley Bassey and Bob Hope in the Associated-Rediffusion Television Studio 5, Wembley, London.

Stan White, who is still very busy today promoting Bing to a number of radio presenters, was there and he sent in a report to *Crosby Post*. This is what he had to say.

****

The Stanley White Story

This day meant for me, a dream that came true, a dream which I thought could never come true. It was all through the kindness of Frank Murphy, who sent me a ticket which was an invitation from Messrs. Associated-Rediffusion at their Wembley Studios, to see Bing Crosby tele-record part of his TV show to be shown on American ABC-TV in December. I had met and talked to Bing and his lovely wife in September of 1960, in London, but I never thought I would actually be able to see and hear Bing singing in person.

It was a cold day on November 12th in London, and as I had journeyed a considerable distance, I went into the TV studios foyer early, where I was allowed to sit in the warm until it was time to enter the studios. This part, offered me by fortune, the opportunity of seeing another great star. As I sat there, in came about five men wrapped in heavy overcoats; they went to the reception desk and asked to be directed to the studio where Bing was working. The first person I recognized was the well known radio and TV personality Jerry Desmonde, who used to be the sidekick for the late and great comedian Sid Field. Then I took a look at another chap who was wearing a hat, and it was the one and only Bob Hope. I did not recognise the others; as they went down the stairs to enter the corridor leading to the studio Bob Hope cracked "We look like an audition for a Gypsy band." Well, I did not see Bob do his part in the show; and Shirley Bassey also did her part before I had entered the studio, due to her having an engagement at night in the South of England.

At about 4.30 p.m., I along with a lot of other people made our way into the studio, and I just stood and stared at the hundreds of huge lights hanging from all angles from the studio roof, along with monitor sets, microphones, and on the floor great tangles of cables and TV cameras. I sat myself on the front row of seats on the studio floor and waited, and as we waited, Bing and Rosie Clooney were to be heard singing for our entertainment from the "Fancy Meeting You Here" LP. A studio manager then came along and said a few words to the audience, explaining about the scenes that had already been shot, and those which we were to see being recorded. Then he introduced that great personality Dave King, who did his best to warm up the audience. Dave did a great job, but everyone seemed to be waiting for someone else by this time. Dave sensed this and shouted out words to the effect of "Fetch that guy in from the golf course." And sure enough, from behind the crowd of studio staff and TV cameras wandered that so familiar figure, to the tune of great applause. Bing Crosby came up to the audience and explained about the show which was running late, and he hoped that it didn't cause inconvenience to anyone. If Bing only knew what his presence meant to all those in the audience, he need never have spoken those words.

Bing then commenced with the opening announcement of his TV show and then sang "Great Day". This scene was shot twice as the tapes were not running smoothly on the first take. From then on, the whole thing was a dream come true; there was Bing and his guests going through one scene after another with no trouble at all. And Bing looked so smart in a very nice suit, and a delightful head of hair. He really looked in his forties, and most certainly not in his late fifties. They say Como is relaxed, but you should see Bing. He wandered about the huge studio floor as the cameras switched to another set, doing a little soft shoe shuffle to amuse himself, and whistling here and there. Then as the 30 second count down for the next take commenced, he just stood there without any apparent care in the world. And as the orchestra struck up he launched into his next song or scene as I can only imagine Bing can.

Bing sings with Marion Ryan and Dave King.

We saw him sing duets with Marion Ryan and Dave King, do a comedy routine with Terry Thomas and one with a girl whose name escapes me *[Editor: It was Miriam Karlin]*. She was taking the part of a painter, and with Bing did a number called "Fings Ain't What They Used to Be". Bing then joined some real London street buskers, and sang a song with them which leads up to another very funny scene in a law court; Bing having been arrested by a London policeman for singing in the street without a license. The Judge turns out to be a fan of Bing's, and comments "Whatever has happened in Hollywood for you to have to turn to singing in the streets?"

My great moment came when Bing walked right up

to a TV camera not many yards from me, and announced his final number. I had never dared to dream that I would ever hear Bing sing in person, but I have always longed to hear him sing one number; within easy earshot of his actual voice . . .and my great moment came . . . he did not name the number but said words to the effect that "Here's one I should know well." A shiver of delight ran right through me as the orchestra and choir came in . . . and Bing's great voice was only equalled by the great song itself, Irving Berlin's one and only WHITE CHRISTMAS. As long as I live I swear I'll never forget that precious minute or two as Bing entranced everyone with the most famous song he has ever sung.

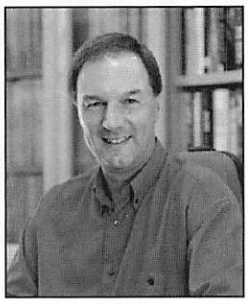
Bing thanked the audience for being so kind to him; and that was that. . . I travelled home on that Sunday night with a memory which overshadowed any other show business event I have ever witnessed - I recall with pleasure the first time I ever saw and heard Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden and Earl Hines, Michael Holliday, Kid Ory and his Jazz Band. I shall recall this Crosby show with pleasure, but that final number of Bing singing "White Christmas" within actual earshot, is the memory which overshadows everything.

Stan White,
(writing in Crosby Post, December, 1961)

(Editor: The TV show was duly shown in the USA on December 11, 1961 and it was included in the recent DVD release "Bing Crosby: The Television Specials Volume 2".)

KEEPING TRACK

Ken Crossland looks at the new releases

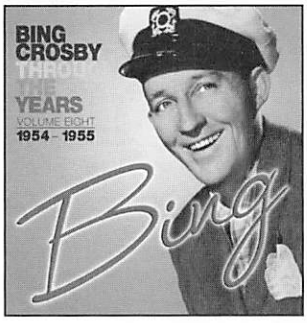


Thin pickings this time around as we await news of BCE's future plans. Here's the best of what's around.

COMPACT DISCS

Bing Crosby - Through the Years, Volume 8 **Sepia 1178** **UK** **£7.00/$12.50**

1. I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams 2. Mexicali Rose 3. That Sly Old Gentleman 4. Alla en El Rancho Grande 5. Tumbling Tumbleweeds 6. Only Forever 7. Did Your Mother Come from Ireland? 8. Lullaby 9. I Can't Escape from You 10. Pennies from Heaven 11. All She'd Say Was "Umh Hum" 12. She Is the Sunshine of Virginia 13. Blue Skies / I'd Rather See a Minstrel Show / Mandy 14. Who Gave You the Roses? 15. Song from Desir e (We Meet Again) 16. Peace Prayer of Saint Francis 17. Blessing of St. Francis 18. The Land Around Us 19. It's Mine, It's Yours 20. The Search Is Through 21. Dissertation on the State of Bliss 22. Jim, Johnny and Jonas 23. Farewell 24. Angel Bells 25. Let's Harmonize



Volume 8 of the Sepia series finally takes us out the other side of the mammoth autobiography project that dominated Bing's work in 1954. This set contains the last 10 numbers that Bing recorded with Buddy Cole for that set, including some of the spoken commentary, as per previous issues. In passing, can anyone tell me what the word is that Bing uses to describe "El Rancho Grande"? "A little Mexican ???" It has intrigued me for over 40 years! From then on, the set is a collector's dream, containing many titles that back in the days when I started collecting, you could only dream about. The Hawaiian "Jim, Johnny and Jonas" and "Farewell" are two such examples. Of course the series has now reached a point where just about all the energy from Bing's association with American Decca had disappeared, and the bits and pieces nature of his work for them at this time is very evident in this set. Occasional singles like the two just mentioned sit alongside songs from his latest films, a couple of hymns and two intriguing songs with the Les Brown band, which as Malcolm says in his excellent notes, might just have been intended for an album that never got off the ground. Good sound quality and excellent production from Sepia. US members can obtain copies via Wig, as usual

Bing Crosby & His Buddies – Gone Fishin' **Retrospective** **UK** **£10.49**

CD1: 1. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 2. Happy Feet (The Rhythm Boys) 3. Dinah (with The Mills Brothers) 4. Shine (with The Mills Brothers) 5. My Honey's Lovin' Arms (with The Mills Brothers) 6. Pennies from Heaven (with Frances Langford and Louis Armstrong) 7. The Way You Look Tonight (with Dixie Lee Crosby) 8. Sweet Leilani (with Lani Mcintyre & His Hawaiians) 9. Bob White (Whatcha Gonna Swing Tonight?) (with Connee Boswell) 10. Small Fry (with Johnny Mercer) 11. Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer (with Johnny Mercer) 12. Gypsy Love Song (with Frances Langford) 13. Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider (with The Foursome) 14. An Apple for the Teacher (with Connee Boswell) 15. Dolores (with The Merry Macs) 16. The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid (with Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden) 17. Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie (with Mary Martin) 18. I'll Capture Her Heart (with Fred Astaire) 19. Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin' (with Trudy Erwin) 20. Pistol Packin' Mama (with The Andrews Sisters) 21. Swinging on a Star (with The Williams Brothers Quartet) 22. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 23. My Baby Said "Yes" (with Louis Jordan) 24. Mine (with Judy Garland) 25. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate

the Positive (with The Andrews Sisters) 26. Put It There, Pal (with Bob Hope) 27. Along The Navajo Trail (with The Andrews Sisters)

CD2: 1. It's Been a Long, Long Time (with Les Paul) 2. I Can't Begin to Tell You (with Carmen Cavallaro) 3. South America, Take It Away (with The Andrews Sisters) 4. A Couple of Song and Dance Men (with Fred Astaire) 5. I Still Suits Me (with Lee Wiley) 6. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 7. The Whiffenpoof Song (with Fred Waring & His Glee Club) 8. Busy Doing Nothing (with Cedric Hardwicke and William Bendix) 9. Play a Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 10. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 11. If I Were a Bell (with Patty Andrews) 12. Moonlight Bay (with Gary Crosby) 13. When You and I Were Young Maggie Blues (with Gary Crosby) 14. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (with Jane Wyman) 15. Watermelon Weather (with Peggy Lee) 16. Chicago Style (with Bob Hope) 17. Back in the Old Routine (with Donald O'Connor) 18. Well, Did You Evah? (with Frank Sinatra) 19. Now You Has Jazz (with Louis Armstrong) 20. True Love (with Grace Kelly) 21. Brazil (with Rosemary Clooney) 22. Fancy Meeting You Here (with Rosemary Clooney) 23. You Came a Long Way from St. Louis (with Rosemary Clooney) 24. Muskrat Ramble (with Louis Armstrong) 25. The Preacher (with Louis Armstrong) 26. Way Down Yonder in New Orleans (with Louis Armstrong)

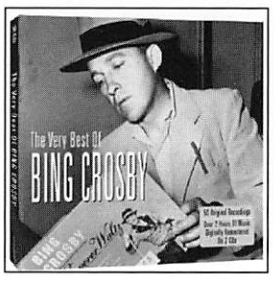
There have been other compilations of Bing's duets but this one probably covers the ground better than most, extending from 1930 to 1960 in terms of recording dates. Not much on here that will be missing from our collections but it's an attractive set with a nice sleeve.

The Very Best of Bing Crosby **One Day Music** **UK** **£4.87**

CD1: 1. Well, Did You Evah! (with Frank Sinatra) 2. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong) 3. Dear Hearts and Gentle People 4. Down by the Riverside (with Gary Crosby) 5. Stranger in Paradise 6. When You and I Were Young, Maggie, Blues (with Gary Crosby) 7. Sparrow in the Tree Top (with The Andrews Sisters) 8. True Love (with Grace Kelly) 9. Young at Heart 10. The Isle of Innisfree 11. McNamara's Band (with the Jesters) 12. In a Little Spanish Town 13. Y'all Come 14. Changing Partners 15. Watermelon Weather (with Peggy Lee) 16. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (with Jane Wyman) 17. Moonlight Bay (with Gary Crosby) 18. Ghost Riders in the Sky 19. Harbour Lights 20. Play a Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby) 21. Mule Train 22. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) 23. Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy 24. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (with The Andrews Sisters) 25. I'll Be Seeing You

CD2: 1. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Al Jolson) 2. There's No Business Like Show Business (with The Andrews Sisters and Dick Haymes) 3. Sioux City Sue 4. Some Enchanted Evening 5. Careless Hands 6. Pistol Packin' Mama (with The Andrews Sisters) 7. Galway Bay 8. Far Away Places 9. Now Is The Hour 10. The Whiffenpoof Song 11. An Apple for the Teacher (with Connee Boswell) 12. (Get Your Kicks on) Route 66 (with The Andrews Sisters) 13. Easter Parade 14. A Gal in Calico 15. The Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope) 16. Along the Navajo Trail (with The Andrews Sisters) 17. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive (with The Andrews Sisters) 18. Is You or Is You Ain't My Baby (with The Andrews Sisters) 19. San Fernando Valley 20. Sunday, Monday or Always 21. Moonlight Becomes You 22. South America, Take It Away (with The Andrews Sisters) 23. Night and Day 24. Don't Fence Me In (with The Andrews Sisters) 25. White Christmas

Much as I hate anything with the "Very Best of" title, I am bound to concede that this is an attractive set. Disc 1 is almost entirely drawn from Bing's 50s work, so the casual purchaser will get lots of the familiar deep Crosby sounds. Clive Fuller's review on Amazon says it all.



"This new compilation comprises 50 tracks and has a running time close on two and a half hours. The sound quality is very good indeed and the illustrated packaging looks classy. Liner notes are by regular Michael Heatley and although there are dozens of collections that bring together the best of Crosby this one has plenty of appeal. This is really a Bing and friends type compilation including as it does duets with Louis Armstrong; Grace Kelly; Peggy Lee; Connie Boswell; Dick Haymes; Al Jolson; Bob Hope; the Andrews Sisters; the Jesters and son Gary. Many familiar songs are here. The recordings date from 1939 to 1956. The slim line packaging used for all these One Day Music releases makes for space saving storage. Good value too."

Just in passing, has anyone any ideas as to what it is that Bing is looking at on the sleeve? A 10" LP sleeve from "The Emperor Waltz" perhaps?

DVD

Little to get excited about here, but look out for a new release of "Stagecoach" in which Bing featured in 1966 as

his last major big screen role. Not a great film and for me the highlights of this release might well be the wonderful Norman Rockwell portraits, reproduced on the cover of the disc, and Julie Kirgo's notes. Here's an extract that is on the marketing site for the disc. It offers an interesting taster!

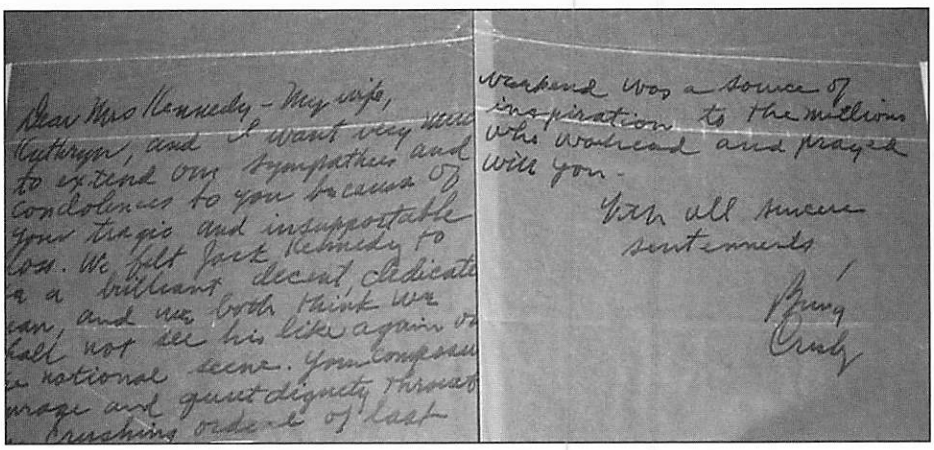
"Let's begin by addressing the elephant in the room: Stagecoach (1966) is a remake of Stagecoach (1939), which actually makes it less like a pachyderm and more like a sitting duck. Why remake the perfect motion picture, an endlessly entertaining work of art brought forth by a visionary (director John Ford) who was intent, among other things, on introducing audiences to one of the most enduring stars in Hollywood history (the utterly sui generis John Wayne)?

Hubris might be one answer, but there are others of perhaps greater legitimacy. First and foremost, however you slice it, Stagecoach offers a cracking good yarn; Dudley Nichols superbly adapted Ernest Haycox's story, "Stage to Lordsburg," for his 1939 screenplay, and Joseph Landon (Von Ryan's Express) followed close on his predecessor's heels for the '66 version. Landon's updates seem designed to reflect the changing mores of the day, not to mention the trend towards "adult" Westerns: a pregnancy can be revealed and discussed, rather than hidden until the moment a woman goes into labor; a "dance-hall creature" can be a clear-cut prostitute and not just a hussy; and violence merely suggested in 1939 becomes a thing, in 1966, of faces split by tomahawks, massacred bodies buzzing with flies, and buckets of well-rouged Karo syrup. (Whether the latter innovation constitutes an improvement depends, of course, on the individual viewer's perspective.)

The earlier version of the film, with all its beauties, had been made in 1:33 black and white; now Twentieth Century Fox could present the sweeping landscapes of the old West in the lustrous glory of CinemaScope and DeLuxe Color. Cleverly, the latter-day filmmakers knew better than to tread on John Ford's sacred ground, and moved the locale from the Southwest and Monument Valley to more northerly territories: the piney woods, rugged mountains, and tumbling cataracts of Colorado's Indian Peaks Wilderness and Caribou Country Club Ranch standing in for what are, presumably, the Black Hills (presumably, because here Geronimo and the Apache give way to Crazy Horse and the Sioux as the stage party's most formidable adversaries)."

What's on the Web?

A couple of interesting items cropped on eBay over the summer. The first was the letter that Bing wrote to Jackie Kennedy one week after the assassination of the President in 1963. Asking price was $1999.99.


Dear Mrs Kennedy - My wife,
Kathryn, and I want very much
to extend our sympathies and
condolences to you because of
your tragic and insupportable
loss. We felt Jack Kennedy to
be a brilliant decent dedicated
man, and we both think we
shall not see his like again on
the national scene. Your composure
courage and quiet dignity through the
crushing ordeal of last
weekend was a source of
inspiration to the millions
who watched and prayed
with you.
With all sincere
sentiments
Bing
Crosby

"Dear Mrs. Kennedy - My wife, Kathryn and I want very much to extend our sympathies and condolences to you because of your tragic and insupportable loss. We felt Jack Kennedy to be a brilliant decent dedicated man, and we both think we shall not see his like again on the national scene. Your composure courage and quiet dignity through the crushing ordeal of last weekend was a source of inspiration to the millions who watched and prayed with you. With all sincere sentiments - Bing Crosby"

A week or two later, the car shown became available. According to the seller, it is Bing's Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, originally purchased by Bing in 1972 and subsequently acquired from his estate. Asking price - a cool $120,000!

Happy listening!

ken@kencrossland.co.uk
http://www.kencrossland.co.uk

Bing Crosby

December 1, 1976

Dear Mr. Grayson:

I would certainly be happy to make an appearance at the March 20th function which you're scheduling for the Motion Picture Home.

At the moment, I just can't get a clear schedule for that time of the year, and I would ask you therefore to contact me in mid-February about my availability.

I certainly can guarantee that if I'm loose, I'll come down there and sing a couple of songs or something.

I'm particularly expert in the area of the 30's and 40's. By expert, I mean I know the songs - I might not sing them well, but I know them all!

Best regards,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

Mr. Michael Grayson
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Designed & printed by dh3 digital ltd., Print Works, Broadwood View,
Ropery Lane, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ U.K.
Tel:+44 (0)191 387 4248 Email: gary@dh3digital.co.uk